

1993 SUMMER FICTION SPECIAL

CORMAC MCCARTHY · JAMES SALTER
RICHARD FORD · PETER MATTHIESSEN
JAYNE ANNE PHILLIPS · ANN BEATTIE

Esquire

THE MAGAZINE FOR MEN

JULY 1993 • \$2.50

What Every Man Should Know About Models

The
perverse
allure and
weird
mythology
of the new
mannequin
culture
By Philip
Weiss

Vendela,
on top of
the heap



COMING FALL 1993

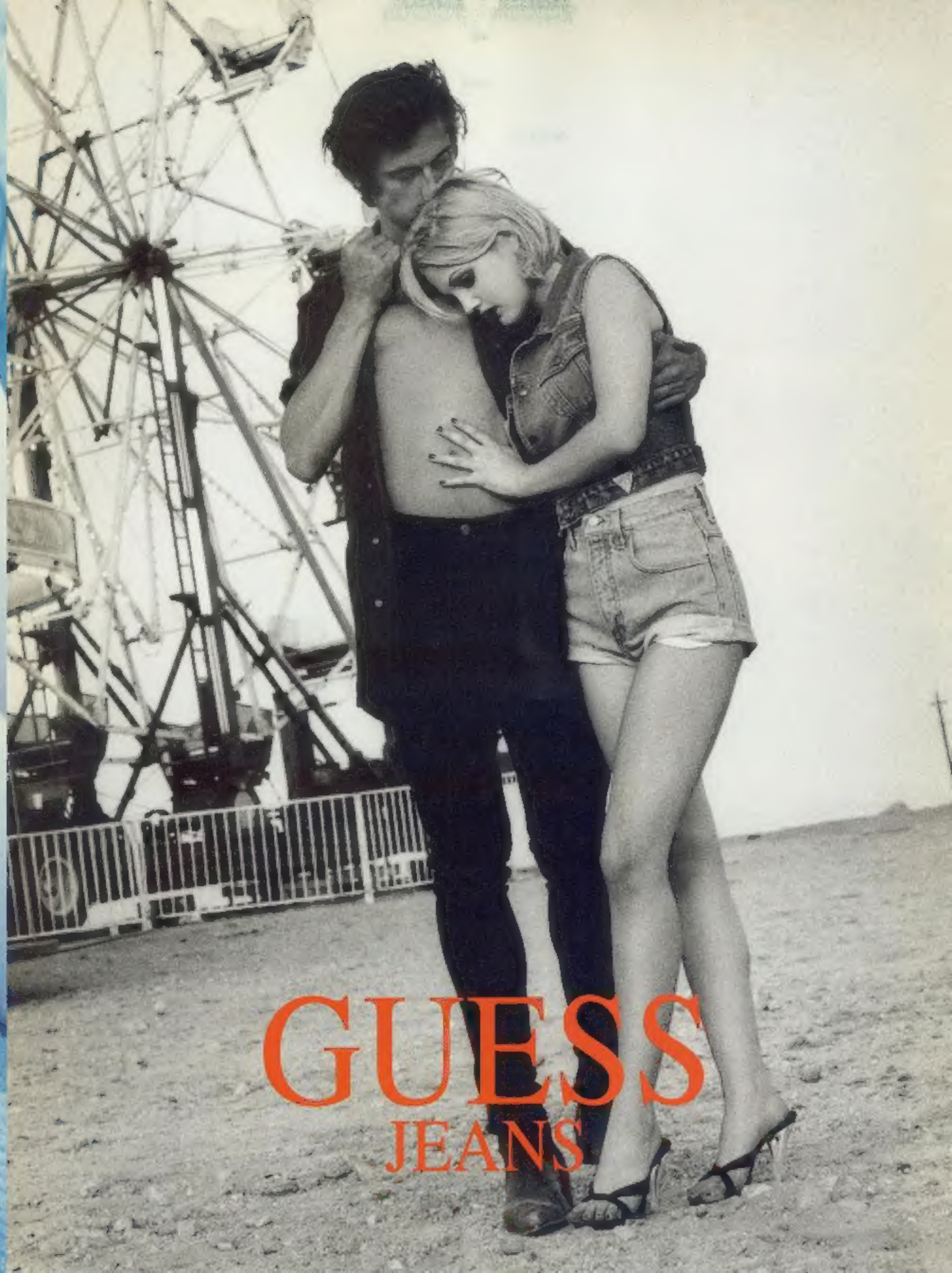


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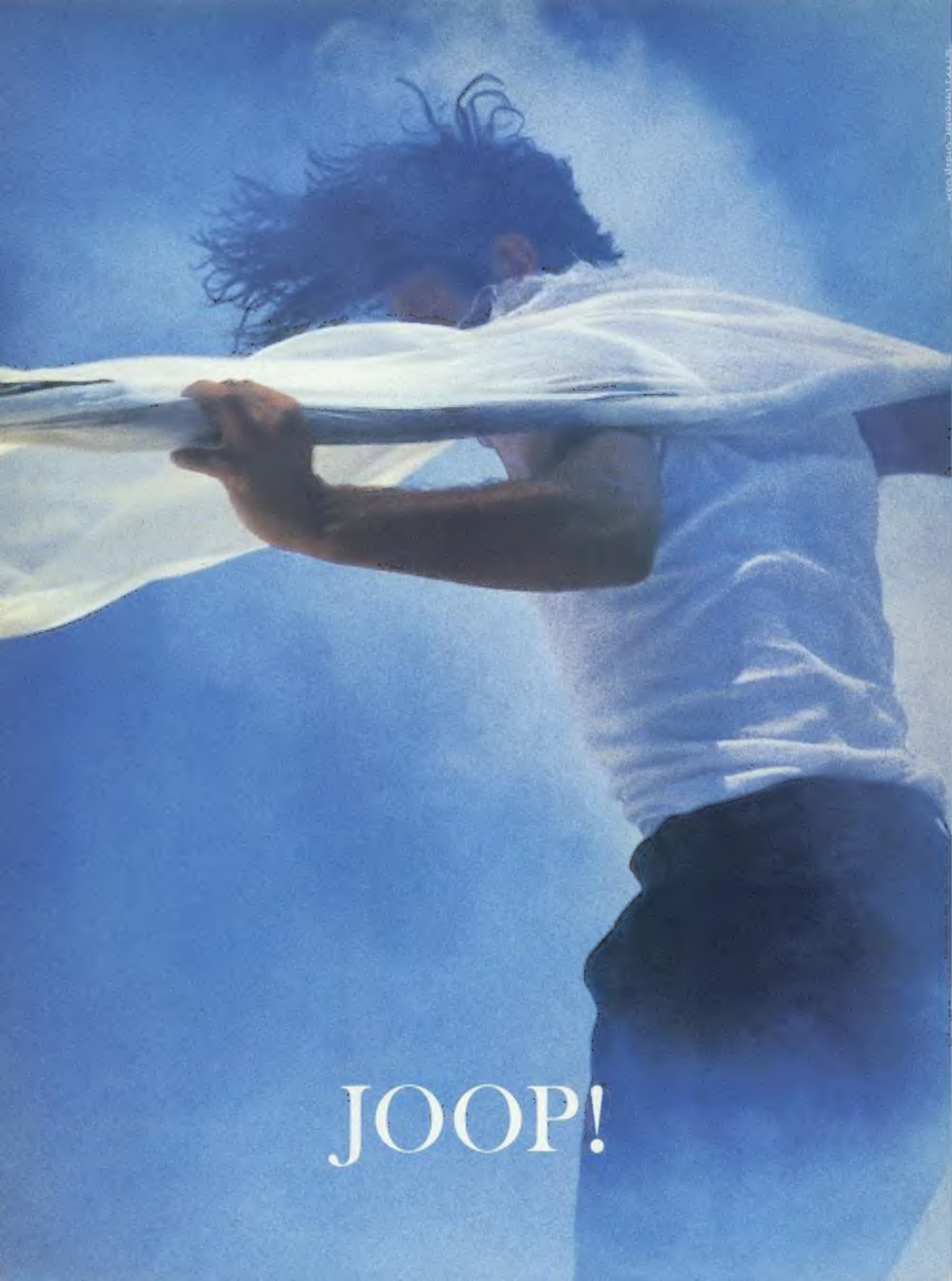
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THE SOUND AND THE FURY

Jagger's Age



WHOA! Mick Jagger goes the distance! What a great cover photo of Mick by Patrik Andersson (April). Mick makes me sing and dance. I hope I can keep my edge as sharp as Mick's throughout my life.

—RICHARD DiMAIO
San Francisco, Calif.

I HAD TO SHAKE MY HEAD when I read Kurt Loder exclaim in your cover story that Mick Jagger "seems almost to vibrate with health." I started laughing when I read that Living Colour bassist Doug Wimbish remarked that Jagger "looks great." I found Patrik Andersson's photos of Jagger to be positively chilling. I gasped when I saw the cover. Only a Patrik Andersson photo session with Keith Richards could be more haunting.

—MARION KUFERT
New York, N.Y.

Crying Foul

ROBERT LIPSYTE's article on baseball, "The Dying Game" (April), avoided the real reason baseball is losing out to football (the real American sport) and basketball. So what if a player shares his bed with starlets as long as he suits up when the team starts to practice and play? Since the life-span of an active player is short, let him negotiate all the money he can, and management will still out-earn him ten to one. The real culprit is the game itself, not the players or owners, though they contribute some. Baseball is a s-l-o-w game: It's as interesting as watching old men playing chess or ditchdiggers trying to find an old septic tank. Speed up the game and you might not have a dying sport.

—ELY I. BERGMANN
San Antonio, Tex.

ACCORDING TO Robert Lipsyte, "Hockey fans can't read." This one can, and I must say I find this a strange remark from someone who obviously cannot write. Why don't he and other Yankee fans stop bitching because the only thing they've won in years is a second dose of George Steinbrenner.

—J. R. ZIMMERMAN
Weston, Ontario

Foundering Father

I HAVE BEEN a longtime female subscriber to Esquire. You are a men's magazine even in this age of women's rights and new-age sensitive guys. I respect the territory and have never been disgruntled or offended by the tone. I must take issue, however, with "The Violation of Sally Hemings," by Steve Erickson (April). No matter how well couched the subject, no matter how beautifully written, no matter how it fits into a larger work, you are offering statutory rape as entertainment to your readers. Shame on you.

—MARET HENSICK
Woolwich, Maine

Zucker Punches

AS A TWENTY-SEVEN-YEAR-OLD subscriber, I took eager notice of a new column chronicling my g-g-generation (Michael Hirschorn's *Lost in the Funhouse*). If my hopes for illumination sagged when his March column featured a debutante ball, they hit the floor with his April column's subject, almighty network man Jeff Zucker. Don't get me wrong—I see the irony. A deb in grunge-rock flannel! A twenty-eight-year-old handing down commandments to Bryant and Brokaw! Who'da thunk? But twentysomethings are bad poets and middle-class nomads, sexual hand wringers and nihilist revelers, newborn politicians and bilingual ad-agency interns. Ashleys and Jeffs we are not.

—JAMES SULLIVAN
New Orleans, La.

I AM A twenty-four-year-old member of the "new professional" generation. The Me Generation taught us that "the one who dies with the most toys wins," and we all wanted to win by a lot. Now we've got serious toys and even more serious debt. And in the workplace we are rewarded not for what we know or what we can do but, as Mr. Hirschorn points out, for whom we know.

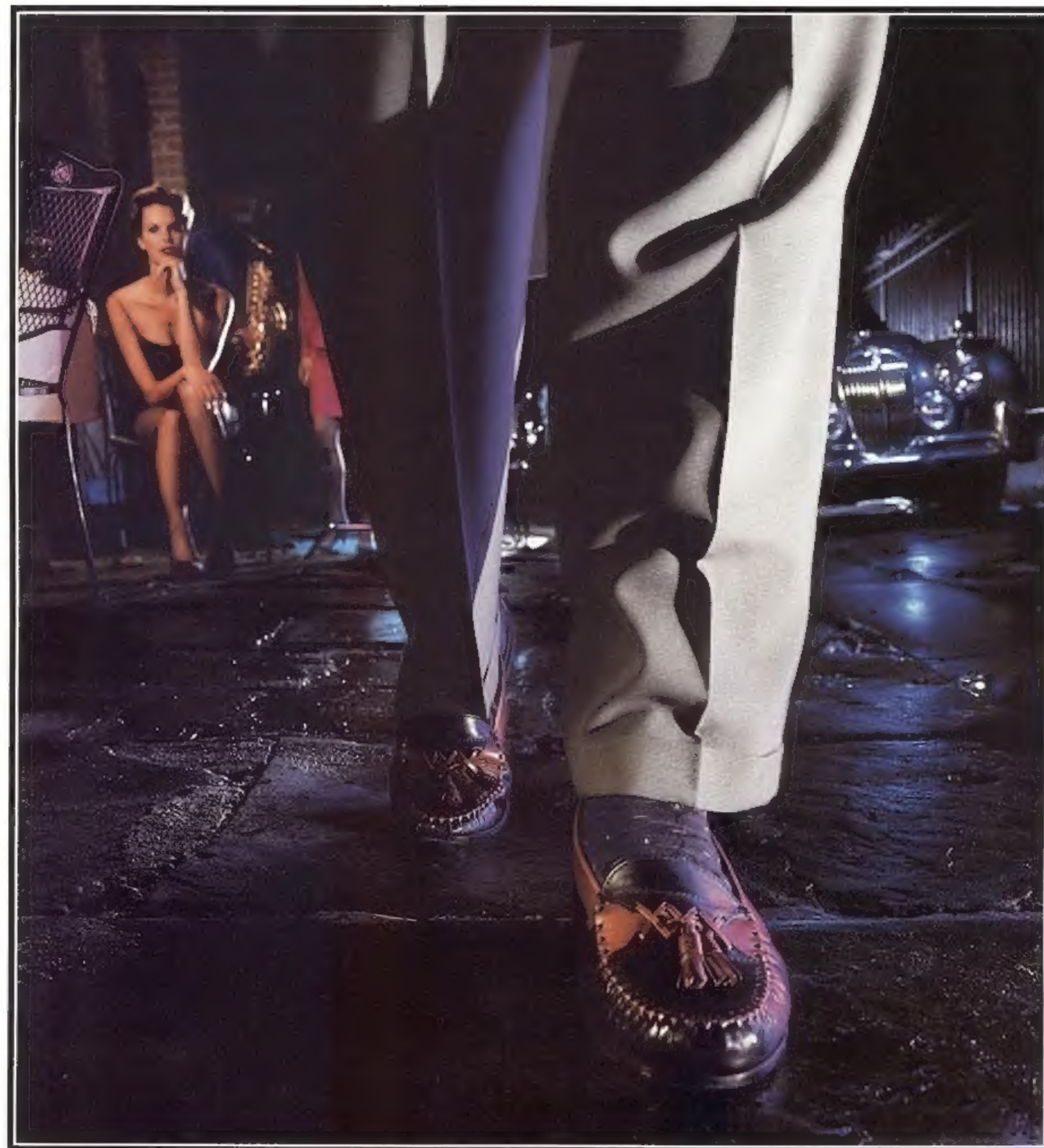
—MICHAEL DUPEE
Williston, Vt.

CUTE PIECE BY Michael Hirschorn on his bloody, if one-sided, rivalry with Jeff Zucker. One quibble: Hirschorn says he fell ill reading my GQ piece on Zucker's "subtle but overpowering sexual charge." Actually, the decidedly less steamy term I used to describe the wunderkind was "not unsexy." Hell, I'd even call Hirschorn not unsexy.

—LUCY KAYLIN
New York, N.Y.

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A strange sporting event took place the other day. A man in a fetal position under a hurdle caught a runner in midair.

Is this fun, or what?

To Antonis Achilleos, part-time busboy, full-time amateur photographer, it is. In fact, to Antonis, making great photographs is more fun than making touchdowns, jump shots or holes in one.



Antonis Achilleos, part-time busboy, full-time amateur photographer, shoots a woman with his Nikon N6006. Please don't try this at home.

Homestretch

—by—
Antonis Achilleos,
busboy

One afternoon, while driving to get a Slurpee, he spotted a vision of beauty in sweat socks flying through the air.

Something clicked.

He grabbed his Nikon N6006, leaped

out of his car, then flung his body under

a hurdle and waited. Was it worth it?

What do you think?
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"Hey, Mister, duck!"

There's a powerful pop-up flash with 28mm coverage. Here Antonis brightened the foreground by increasing the flash one stop. And he underexposed one stop to maintain the ominous sky and provide contrast to the brightly lit foreground.

To create a sense of motion (as if she needed it), he used Rear Curtain Sync.

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which fires the flash just before the shutter closes, and he shot at 1/15th. Even though

the flash isn't designed to cover the entire frame, Antonis chose a 24mm AF Nikkor to exaggerate the angle. He could have picked any one of nearly eighty legendary lenses. The same lenses most pros use

behind the dugout or in the end zone. The N6006, however, is the Nikon for people who don't have press credentials. Or sideline passes.

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BACKSTAGE WITH ESQUIRE

NO MATTER HOW long they sifted through the ashes and debris of the Branch Davidian compound, no matter how many bone fragments they analyzed, or how many survivors they interviewed, the authorities were unlikely



Ivan Solotaroff

to dig up an answer to the most disturbing question of all: What were we doing in Waco in the first place?

Soon after the siege began, Esquire dispatched contributing editor IVAN SOLOSTAROFF to the buckle of the Bible Belt, where he began his fifty-plus days of waiting and watching ("The Last Revelation from Waco," page 52). For Solotaroff, covering David Koresh had an obvious, though no less eerie, similarity to his first Esquire article, a piece on Charles Manson (February 1992). "Both Koresh and Manson are chameleons," Solotaroff says of the two would-be messiahs. "They're enormous presences occupying fragile egos."

As for the answers that emerge from this latter-day Masada, Solotaroff believes "the whole situation was unnecessary from start to finish." And with millennium fever going around, "we might be seeing a lot more of these guys."

That men are infatuated with models is ancient, going back to that legendary idol-worshiper himself, Pygmalion. Indeed, it makes perfect sense: Where else should a model be, if not on a pedestal? But at some point models ceased being models. They became supermodels. And in doing so they wrested cultural dominance from such deserving souls as movie stars and athletes. In "What We Think About When We Think About Models" (page 56), contributing editor PHILIP WEISS assesses—and obsesses over—our fascination with the mannequin culture. "When I began reporting," Weiss admits, "I was intimidated by models. You meet some of these women and you are reduced to this fifteen-year-old, tremulous, wet-in-the-hand, stuttering, quivering mass of protoplasm." On the other hand, "they're just as insecure as the next guy."

ALAN COBER, who illustrates Walter Shapiro's *Our Man in the White House* column (page 64) each month, is one of America's most eminent graphic commentators. "I consider myself a visual journalist," says Cober, whose work has appeared in, among other magazines, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *Rolling Stone*. "As Walter is doing his essay so am I. But mine is a visual essay." In addition to his magazine work, Cober is a professor of art and a Distinguished Visiting Artist at the State University of New York at Buffalo.



Alan Cober

When David Letterman abdicated the *Late Night* throne earlier this year,

few would have surmised that NBC would have chosen comedy writer Conan O'Brien as his replacement. That is, everyone except his family and friends, who seem to think the choice was natural. In "Who Is That Young, Carrottop Guy?..." (page 68), THOMAS FIELDS-



Thomas Fields-Meyer

MEYER, a Los Angeles-based free-lance writer, offers an oral history of the thirty-year-old O'Brien. "I talked to him the day before he got the news from NBC," says Fields-Meyer, who attended Harvard at the same time as O'Brien, "and he had all the time in the world. The next day, though, he ripped his answering machine out of the wall."

Conan O'Brien's good fortune, however, might have been Garry Shandling's, if only the comedian was willing to give up his HBO series, *The Larry Sanders Show*. Contributing editor TAD FRIEND, who in March deconstructed the American sitcom, went behind the scenes at *Sanders* to understand why doing a faux talk show was more enticing than doing a real one ("Garry Shandling's Alter Ego Trip," page 35).



Tad Friend

"I would ask Garry a question," Friend says, "and he would then tell me to ask him the same question again but to Larry. It was kind of like dealing with the Smothers Brothers—only funny."

Contributing editor PHIL PATTON began his career in 1975 at Esquire. After two years of fact-checking, Patton left to become a free-lance writer. While he continued to write for the magazine throughout the '80s, it was not until he began his *Living Quarters* column (now *Design*, page 26) that Patton returned for good: He hasn't missed an issue since March 1988. This month, Patton pulls double duty, also writing about the Velociraptor, the dinostar of Steven Spielberg's *Jurassic Park* ("The First Action Hero," page 106). "Dinosaurs are as much cultural artifacts as cars," says Patton, whose *Made in USA* (Penguin) is in paperback this month, "and we read the culture through these artifacts."

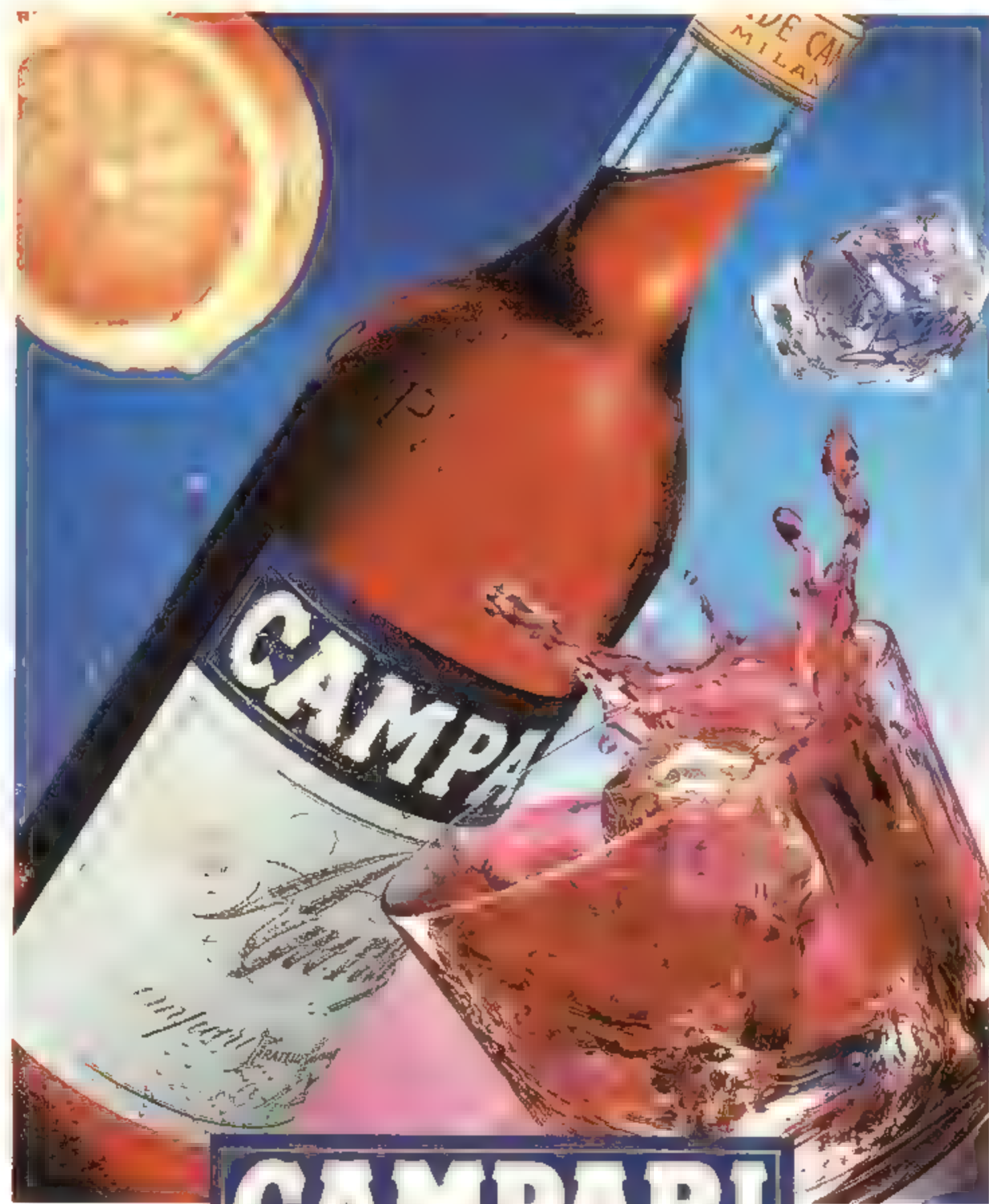
Finally, this month marks Esquire's tenth annual summer fiction issue. Once again, literary editor Will Blythe and fiction editor Rust Hills have surveyed America's literary terrain—from its hardscrabble western plains to its tripwire urban blocks, from its rivers and suburbs to its mountains and malls—and unearthed fiction by James Salter, Ann Beattie, Peter Matthiessen, Jayne Anne Phillips, Richard Ford, and Cormac McCarthy (who among them have produced more than fifty books). "These writers are such masters of literary landscapes," Blythe says of the thirty-two pages of fiction, "that the least we could do was give them a little bit of real estate." 14



Phil Patton



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Esquire

JULY 1993

How to Get Rich in the Nineties

We all deserve it. **WILLIAM MUNNY**

AS PLAYED BY CLINT EASTWOOD IN *UNUSUAL SUSPECTS*

EVEN IF YOU DIDN'T go to business school, sooner or later you'd pick up the lesson of the railroad tycoons. They figured they had it made, what with their rails crisscrossing the country. That's why they didn't pay much attention to all the new roads and to all of the trucks that were starting to roll along on them. They just didn't get this new shipping business. They were in the railroad business, after all. That was the thinking that did them in.

What business do you think the people in the telephone business think they're in these days? What about the people in the cable-TV business? And how about those zany executives in show business? No matter what business they think they're in, if they're not also in the strategic-planning business, they're nowhere. That's *How to Get Rich in the Nineties* Rule Number 1. Rule Number 2 is that if your strategy isn't global, it's not a strategy. This goes back at least as far as the idea of buying the world a Coke. Anyway, all of the people above and various other would-be mixed-media tycoons are currently thinking about video on demand VOD. That is, you want a movie, any movie ever made, all you do is call somebody up and order it. Who that somebody will be is an interesting question. The cable business

as we now know it is getting obsolete very fast. And you can also forget about programming as we now know it. Rule Number 3: If it's not interactive programming, it's not programming. And why limit ourselves to movies? Let's deal with all the information that exists. Let's dish it out of some central world server to whoever wants it and can pay the freight. No kidding. We've got the consumer demand, and we've just about got the technical feasibility. We're talking converging technologies here, even as the President talks "information highway." You put the right chip and the right software (work fast, Bill) in that little cable box and you've armed 95 million American households with the ability to grow a little antenna out of that box and use it to place a cellular phone call to the phone company to cancel their telephone service. They just won't need

it anymore, except for the wire to run all those movies and information options into their TV/computer monitors. Soon the cable/telephone companies will be throwing free phone service into their packages to lure subscribers.

So much for North America, and we haven't even begun to talk about satellites. In fact, numerous technology alliances are forming to sort out the various questions of digital cable versus direct broadcast satellite versus asynchronous digital subscriber lines versus continuous video versus store-and-forward video. If it sounds complicated, it is, but it's just a matter of time before a standard architecture is hammered out. Remember all the hassles about a standard VCR format? The point is that some people are going to get very rich very fast, but definitely not in the railroad business. **T.M.**



After Charles "Chip" Warren founded Atch, now the largest manufacturer of light components, he took over National Hospital Supply and then diversified into the home-shopping arena. At the age of forty, he retired from the business world.

MAN AT HIS BEST

EDITED BY ANITA LECLERC

FILM

Breaking Character

RICHARD EDSON was a Downtown musician working in bands like Sonic Youth when his musician pal John Lurie invited him onto this low-budget movie, *Stranger Than Paradise*. With their porkpie hats and matching tomahawk schnozzles, the two made fine scumbags, so fine they became walking advertisements for a brand of negative urban cool. That was New York in the early '90s, infatuated with bohemia, with happy, handsome people trying to pass for an odd, feebly like Richard Edson.

For Edson, *Stranger* was his passport to steady work as a character actor. That sounds too mainstream a calling, but he persuades you that it is a highly existential way to make a living. "I live in hotels," he says. "I don't know where I live." In the movies you've seen him more than you know,

anonymity being the character actor's protective coloration. He was the good pizza parlor son in *Do the Right Thing*, he was blown up early in *Platoon* (the scene in which his guts fell out was cut), and in *Pose* he plays a corrupt lawyer, although not a corrupt lawyer with a particularly big part. "I was misled about that part, but Edson does have some good CD stores," he says.

An alert, edgy man, Edson has entered into the spirit of the character actor's directionless search. His latest movie is *Super Mario Brothers*, in which the brothers try to free Princess Daisy from the grips of King Koopa and his minions. "I am a minion," he says. "I even get my own minion doll."

Among his colleagues, only Oliver Stone cast aspersions on *Super Mario Brothers* as a career choice. "So I said to him, 'Well then, no, so, give me a job,'" Edson says. "Character actors may be a little touchy, he suggests, 'because they all want to be the lead.' He's got his shot with the current *Joy Buzzer*, a fast talking, soft-hearted indie movie about a showbiz agent who loses the deal and wins the girl (played by Cedric the Entertainer's daughter).



So Edson should be on top of the world, except that he recently lost the part of the villain in Macaulay Culkin's new movie, and a diet of East Village cool can't prepare you for that. "I'm sitting in this hotel in L.A. looking at an employment," he says, warming up to his predicament. "I'm finished through." But Edson's too good for that to be so. Sometimes despair is just another character role. —JOSEPH HOOPER

STAR SEARCH: Super Mario Brothers minion left and cool scumbag, Richard Edson waits for his next big break.

Air Heads

LIKE BICYCLES, bicycle helmets have been reinvented. The dominant shape has moved from couch drop to teardrop—chamfered and channeled with foam encased in a stream-lined plastic shell decorated like a hot rod and weighing as little as half a pound. The goal is not just to make the helmet go smoothly through the air but to make the air go smoothly through the helmet. Thus at Specialized, they make use of official government wind tunnel research. Bell has teamed up with Racal to offer the Pump, borrowed from the athletic shoes. Think of it as an air bag for the head.

Helmet makers love graphs that show the difference a gram of bulk or a square millimeter of wind resistance can make on a long ride. How a tiny movement can loom monstrously large. Like compound interest. Fiddle a hundred miles. Specialized tells you, and its Air Force II will bring you in nearly three and a half minutes ahead of the duffer with a conventionally shaped helmet.

Not that anyone admits to making such a thing. The only real contention is two impact standards: the less stringent ANSI for people with very hard heads, and the tougher Snell for those of us with softer ones. Tough choice? Not to worry. Almost all makers now meet both.



HEALTH WATCH

Something New to Worry About

THE FOLLOWING are book titles from the Wellness catalogue put out by New Leaf, a book distributing company in Atlanta.

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Haley, Ronald. <i>The Atmosphere</i> | Dangers of Compulsory |
| Frederick, Barbara. <i>Your Health</i> | Immortalism |
| David, Steven. <i>How to Live</i> | Physical Health: Flying Affects |
| Hart, Thomas. <i>Seven Steps to Health</i> | Your Health |
| Chick, Mary. <i>How to Live</i> | Complete Guide to Mercury |
| Tom, Peter. <i>How to Live</i> | Texts from the Bible |
| Frederick, Barbara. <i>How to Live</i> | Health Hazards of Milk |
| Frederick, Barbara. <i>How to Live</i> | |

MARY ROACH



HARD HATS (FROM TOP): LT 970, Bell Atalanche (also at left), Rosebank Volante, Bell Razor, Giro Ventoux, Rosebank Volante, Specialized Air Force II.



THE DIRECTOR
SUNGLASSES

M A N A T H I S B F S T

The Convertible



NOISY, UNCOMFORTABLE, impractical, expensive, and even a little dangerous, the convertible is, in spite of its drawbacks, the most beloved car on the American road. You'd hardly guess it from the sales figures, of course. Convertibles have never accounted for more than 7 percent of the passenger car market. Still, auto dealers know that a surefire way of drawing men into their showrooms is to put a convertible in the window. The men end up buying sedans, but it's the convertible that made them walk in the door.

This phenomenon so intrigued the top brass at Chrysler forty years ago that they hired Dr. Ernest Dichter, a motivation psychologist, to get to the bottom of it. Dichter discovered that men respond to a convertible the same way they respond to a mistress—with associations of freedom, romance, and a touch of danger. The four-door sedan, on the other hand, represents the wife: practical, useful, and safe. Dichter's study, which has come to be known as *Mistress Versus Wife*, concludes that men ogle convertibles, but they marry sedans.

You may have noticed that more people drive convertibles in the movies than in real life. That's because Hollywood long ago recognized that the image is sexy and liberating. It's also because it's easier to shoot a scene in an open car, and you get greater cinematic values, too. You can put Grace Kelly behind the wheel of a Sunbeam Alpine, for example, and show her zipping along the Riviera with Cary Grant in *To Catch a Thief*. (Those sequences are fraught with irony now, but in 1955 they were the stuff of dreams. After the film came out, dealers couldn't stock enough Sunbeam Alpines.)

For years Hollywood has glossed over the shortcomings of convertibles, particularly in films that were shot indoors with rear-projected scenery. Take a look at Grace Kelly's hair blowing prettily in the above-mentioned Alfred Hitchcock movie, then compare it for verité with the wild Medusa hair of Geena Davis and Susan Sarandon in last year's *Thelma & Louise*. You don't have to be an aeronautics engineer to know that convertibles are hell on hair. But so what? The whole point of convertibles, after all, is that they keep you in touch with motion. It's the proud owner of a sleek, airtight hardtop sedan who turns to his passenger and murmurs, "Can you believe we're doing ninety?" In a convertible, he wouldn't think to ask. Nor would he be heard if he did. Only in movies do people ride in open cars while talking in conversational tones. The rest of us have to shout. The movie *Topper* (1937) went so far as to imply that it might even be fun to die in a con-

vertible. As the film begins, Cary Grant and Constance Bennett run into a ditch in their elegant roadster. They are thrown from the car and killed, whereupon their ghosts rise up (dressed in black tie and evening gown, no less) and proceed to make wisecracks and haunt the lovable banker, Roland Young. Ask James Dean if that's the way it really works.

With Hollywood's energetic promotional support behind them, convertibles soared in popularity in the 1950s. Their share of the market doubled and then tripled. Sales hit a peak of 540,000 in 1963, but they never reached that level again, the popular 1965 Mustang notwithstanding. The downturn, whether by coincidence or design, began virtually the moment President Kennedy was shot in an open car.

Granted, there were practical forces working against convertibles at the time. Air conditioning and stereo systems were becoming affordable extras, and neither made any sense with the top down. New superhighways were inviting speeds in excess of 80 miles an hour, and at that velocity the buffeting and the noise can scramble a person's brain. Matters wors-



TOP DOWN: Retro ragtop, the Miata, top, wind-blasted reality *Thelma & Louise*, pure make-believe, *To Catch a Thief*, and Fellini's way *La Dolce Vita*

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M A N A T H I S B E S T

ened in the early 1970s when the oil crisis and an economic recession made convertibles a costly anachronism. As it that were not enough, studies released by Cornell University showed that anyone unlucky enough to have an accident in a convertible was thirty times more likely to die because of the likelihood of being thrown from the car. There began to be talk that the government might impose rollover safety standards, which would have made the cars all but illegal. Before that happened, Detroit gave up the ghost. At 10:12 A.M. on April 12, 1976, a white Cadillac Eldorado rolled off the assembly line, and production of American convertibles came to a halt.

Convertibles were not dead, however. European automakers continued to turn them out, and auto-body shops in this country suddenly found themselves doing a brisk business cutting the roofs off American sedans and replacing them with soft tops. One such customer was Lee Iacocca. He took a Chrysler LeBaron into a chop shop in the summer of 1982, then drove around in it and was mobbed at his local supermarket. He took it as a sign from above. "I decided to bring back the convertible," he recalled in his memoirs. Thus began Part II of the History of the American Convertible. Soon Ford and GM followed Chrysler's lead, and by 1992 convertibles had regained more than 2 percent of the market, with the LeBaron and the Mazda Miata in the lead.

This year Detroit expects to sell as many as 250,000 convertibles, and hopeful executives are predicting that the niche may ultimately grow to 4 percent of the market. This time around, the product is much improved.

Tops don't leak the way they used to. Buffeting and noise are still problems, but lesser ones. The Corvette thoughtfully raises the volume on the stereo whenever the car accelerates, and the Miata has speakers in the headrests. Structurally, convertibles are sturdier now, too, and seat belts and air bags have drastically reduced the danger of being ejected in an accident. Still, a person in an open car is obviously more vulnerable

than he would be in a sedan with a steel roof.

But no one seems overly concerned about it. Not the insurance companies. Not the regulators. Not the automakers. As a matter of fact, 1991 accident statistics confirm that disproportionately fewer people die in convertibles today than in sedans. That may have less to do with the safety of the cars than with the people who drive them and how often they do it. As it

happens, buyers of convertibles are older, more affluent, and better educated than the average driver. The tag line in the recent LeBaron ad says it all: Midlife Chrysler. Men of this demographic stripe buy a convertible as a second car, an escape vehicle, a hard-earned perk. They take it out for an invigorating change of pace, and when they do, they handle it with loving care and an excess of caution. Just as they would a mistress. "

BIBLIOPHILIA

How to Write a Rave Review

TO GET YOU STARTED, let's take a sample book and pretend that it's the one you want to give a rave review to. I've got one here for instance, in red paperback galley called *How to Do Things Right: The Memoirs of a Fussy Man* (David R. Godine Publisher \$22.95, hardcover, \$34.95, softcover, 272 pages). Seems to be an odd book. Don't say it's odd, though, describe it as "unique" or "original" or "refreshingly different." You've got to learn to rave.

Go more like this: *How to Do Things Right* is not just one wonderful book, but three wonderful books! Book One, "How to Do Some Particular Things Particularly," is charming as well as wise.

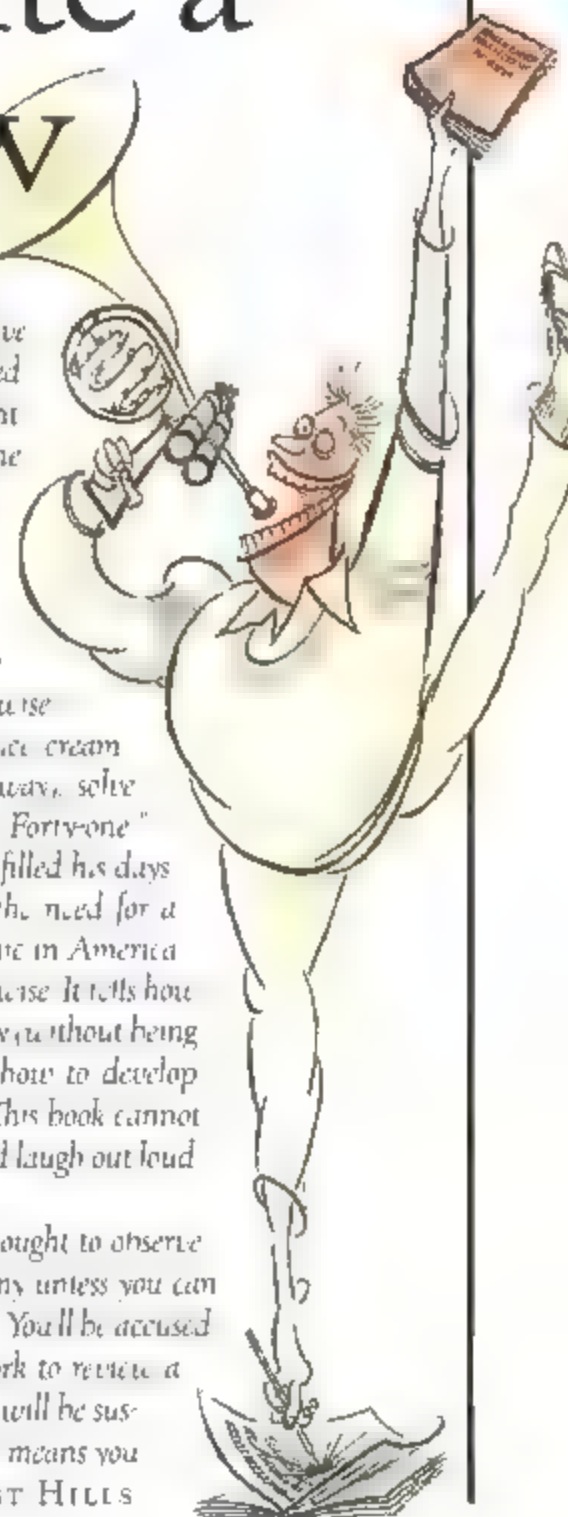


RUST HILLS

It tells how to do all sorts of things like eat an ice cream cone, organize a family picnic, and keep it that way, solve America, and so on. Book Two, "How to Retire at Forty-one," is poignant as well as wise. It tells how the author filled his days after quitting as a magazine editor, and asserts the need for a Leisure Ethic to supplant the outmoded Work Ethic in America. Book Three, "How to Be Good," is witty as well as wise. It tells how to attain moral virtue in the corrupt modern society (without being completely out of it), including such matters as how to develop personal "principles" even when you have none. This book cannot fail to change your life for the better; it will make you think hard and laugh out loud. It may be the best book ever written! Now, that is raving.

Of course, there are certain ethics to book reviewing that you ought to observe. Never accept the opportunity to review a book by a personal enemy unless you can trash it convincingly. Never review a book by a friend or a colleague. You'll be accused of cronyism. And never ask anyone at a periodical where you work to review a book of yours in its pages. If it gets a favorable review, the judgment will be suspect. You should spare your colleagues this embarrassment, even if it means you have to write the review yourself.

—RUST HILLS



A Genealogy of the Really Big Shoe

NIKE DESIGNER Tinker Hatfield often wears a lape, pin bearing the image of Benny the Cab from Roger Rabbit. For Hatfield, former pole vaulter and architect, "an athletic shoe is a kind of

cartoon of a shoe." That seems just right these days, now that Michael Jordan romps through space in ads with Porky Pig and Marvin Martian. But what the athletic shoe is a cartoon of is a car.

The shoe as car is a conceit at least as old as Converse's early 1970s slogan, *Limousines for the Feet*, but it's one that Hatfield has brought to life. The designer believes shoes are as central to the culture as cars were in the 1950s. The classic Pegasus running shoe, they say, is like the Ford Mustang. The Air Deschutz sandal is a dune buggy; the Air Mowabb is an off-road 4x4. And the Air Jordan is the Eldorado or Roadmaster of our time.

What Nike calls "the Jordan product" or

No straps but a new self-cinching lace system

The base wraps up and arches like a foot. Hatfield wants to figure out how to absorb impact organically, with the shape of the sole, instead of mechanically, with the air bag.

The sole is molded like a petroglyph with international symbols and words—Japanese, Chinese, German, Italian, Russian, Swahili. "It's no longer just American but a global game" is the message.

The silhouette logo was taken from a billboard ad of Jordan in front of a skyline—inspired by the Ralph Lauren Polo logo.

Inside is a new material called Toro Tuff. "We want to get away from layering," says Hatfield. "It's more like skin."

Ribs like those on truck tires lend a no-nonsense, almost military air.



TOUGH ON THE BOARDS: Tinker Hatfield keeps the Jordan flying.

just "the Jordan," has to be different every model year. Its look filters down the line to other models, as style once did from Caddy to Chevy. And next year will mark a decade since the first Jordan was introduced on September

15, 1984, and got as much attention as the star. An unprecedented two million pairs were sold. It was the first shoe whose color and shape aimed to express a style of play, and its successors would echo the evolution of Jordan's image

For an in-house video, Nike's media whizzes have morphed ten years of Jordan's evolution into a seething time lapse of exoskeletonally overlapped layers and textures. When you buy the Jordan product, Nike marketers like

to say, "you buy a piece of Michael Jordan."

But what taught Nike the most was the second Jordan model. It sat in warehouses. It performed just as well as the first, but its Italian styling didn't move people. It

also taught Nike that fewer than half of all buyers used the shoes for the sport for which they had been designed. High-tech shoes are like 4x4's that never leave the pavement: sports cars that never break 45—but still have to be able to. It's called implied performance.

So the company summoned Hatfield, who understood that performance was theatrical too, that the shoe business was also show business. Each November Jordan strolls into Nike's headquarters in Beaverton, Oregon, a "campus" like Apple's or Microsoft's, past the glittering new buildings named after jocks, the Bo Jackson Sports and Fitness Center, the Joe Paterno Child Development Center to the Michael Jordan Building to talk to Hatfield about next year's shoe. Like future car designs, the new Jordan is kept tightly under wraps. But Hatfield allowed an unprecedented preview, a Detroit-style sneak peek, of the 1994 Jordan.

The new shoe is retro, back to basics: a tough, big-faced model, in white or olive green, a monster-truck take on an old-style sneaker. "No bells or whistles, no garbage—it's distilled design," Hatfield says. "We've grown up a bit. It's more responsible and sophisticated. What you've learned leads you back to something, the way as you get older you get more interested in old cars." ■



AIR DINO

TO PRESS HIS IDEAS to the limit, Hatfield designs "show shoes"—like concept cars—for Hollywood. He did the Batboot, Michael J. Fox's shoe for *Back to the Future Part II*, the cartoon footwear for the *Hare Jordan* ad, and the latest, a dinosaur shoe, with reptilian scales and a distinct claw on the heel, inspired by the days Hatfield spent helping the guys inside velociraptor suits on Steven Spielberg's *Jurassic Park*. Hatfield dreamed of selling the shoe, but a deal fell through. Some of the images, however, are echoed in the reptilian, aggressive shapes of the Air Carnivore cross trainer designed to prevent ankle sprains. And perhaps some of its spirit is in the military green of the new Jordan.

Taken Born Air Evolution



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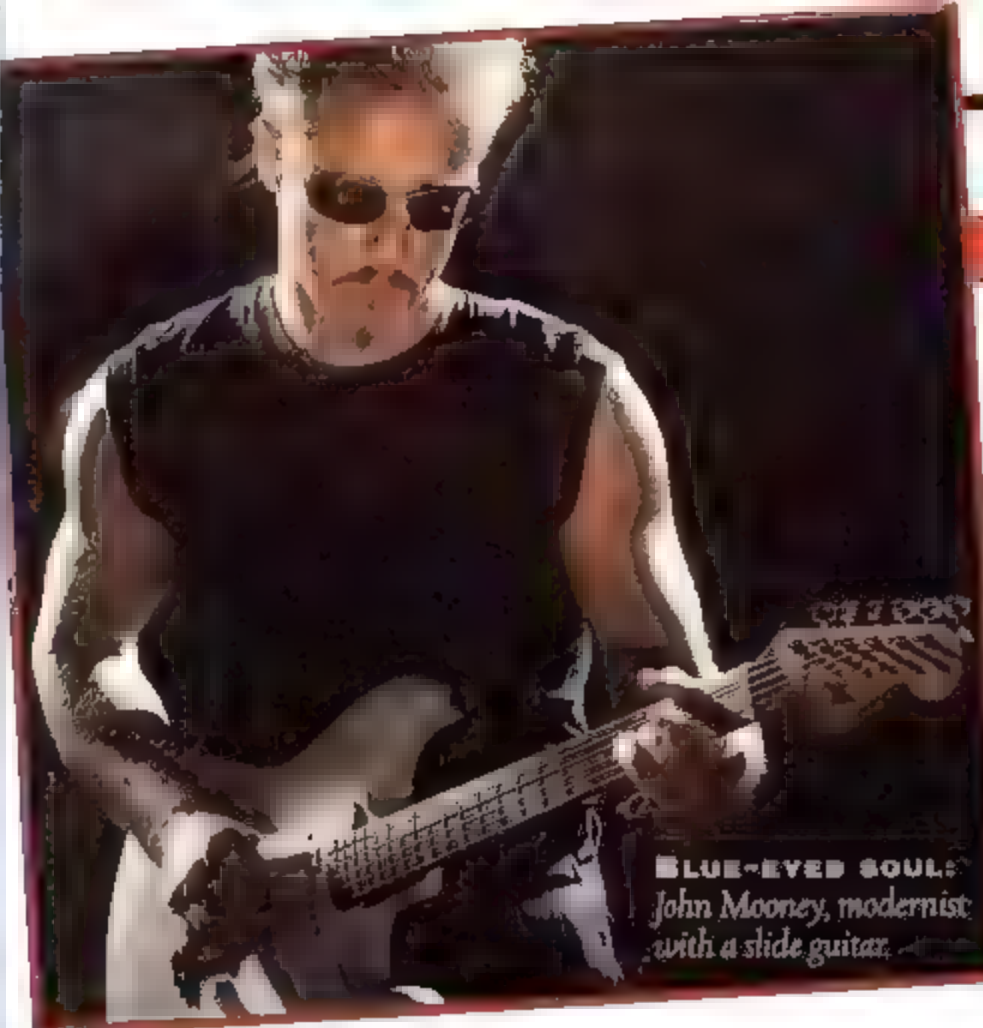


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King of the White Blues

YOU DON'T HAVE to know for sure whether Robert Johnson's deal was with the devil or with Columbia to be able to recite how the blues came over on saucers' ships, then went upriver from the Delta to the Big Cities by the Great Lakes where it turned electric wires plugged into a wall at Pepper's and a hundred juke joints. I mean, God strike me dead if I don't believe every doom scraped syllable Blind Willie Johnson ever uttered, even if I can't make out a single gospelated groan. No, it is not our concern what cards the stiff was holding in Blind Willie McTell's "Dying Crapshooter Blues." What we need to know right now is, with the death of Stevie Ray Vaughan: Who is the King of the White Blues?

This King question is much within the tradition,

considering the blues has long been repetitive with as much boasting and toasting as any gangsta rap, lousy with gravel-voiced claimants to being King of this or King of that (fill in the geography and style). As for King of the White Blues, we might as well search for King of the Sheepish Ambivalence. To wit: I recall a twenty-year-old conversation with Mike Bloomfield, who once put out

Two Je is Blues, was a pioneer shutting the blues from the (black) South Side of Chicago over to the New Trier north. Being an architect of grand crossover did not seem to give him much pleasure, however. He feared that the music was being taken too far from its "source" and that no matter how far down the neck a white player went, there'd always be limitations. "Muddy Waters got a fourteen-inch pecker; it just keeps coming out of his pants," Bloomfield imparted gloomily. "What can you do about that?"

Additional, hoochy-coochy commentary on Norman Mailer's crawling king snake-in-the-trousers treatise on the "white negro" aside, the search for the King of the White Blues must go on. This is because, with most of the "masters" dead, these days when we talk about "classic" blues (and forget Robert Cray, we are talking about white blues. Statements like that get you letters, but before you write find the names of the nineteen non-white, non-holders of B.A.'s who've bought a Sonny Boy Williamson record in the past decade—and that's counting both Sonny Boy Williamsons.

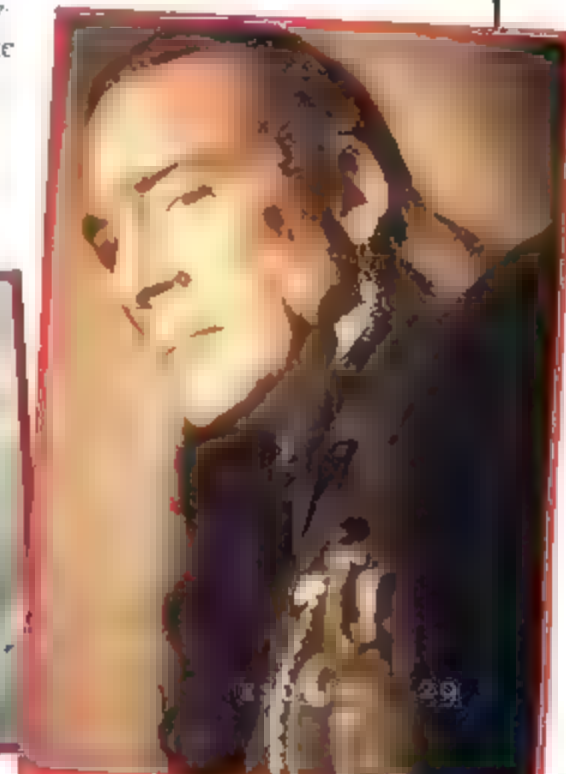
Stevie Ray had everything a King of the White

Blues, circa 1990s, needs ultrafast virtuoso to a fault: fingers a compulsory archivist's mastery of the Elmore Wolf Hopkins Otis Rush (et cetera et cetera) rift museum, into which was incorporated the acidic expansions of the Brit Yardbirdists, creating a stew sanctified with requisite Hendrixicks. But now that SRV is gone, who's left?

We'll a bunch of dudes—and they're dudes, dude. Of the more visible candidates (relatively speaking in this mutant genre) John Campbell, whose *Howlin' Many* is out on Elektra, is pushing hard, but he's into this boogeyman thing, all clanky with graveyard bedsheet-waving, leavened by nary a walk on gilded splinters. It's like Screaming Jay without the wink.

A lot woolier and wholly quintessential in the fringe-contender bar-band category is Omar and the Howlers. Omar, currently out of Austin, records on Rounder's Bulseye Blues label, one of several boutiqueish—the Boutique Blues?—companies dedicated to keeping the NPR playlists well stocked. Bet Omar's better drunk you and him. Still, he's not bad. A (Howlin') Wolfman Jack (or is it Sam the Sham?) look-alike, he sounds like him too.

HELLHOUNDS ON THE TRAIL: Dave Hole, Omar and John Campbell (left to right), chasing the King.



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M A N A T H I S B F S T

JAZZ

Miles and Miles

TWO YEARS AFTER Miles Davis's death, musicians are releasing their recorded meditations on the trumpeter's work, the jazz world's very practical approach to paying respects to the recently departed. Columbia Records has just released an all-star sampler, *The Miles Davis Trumpet Tribute*, and Reprise/Qwest is readying an album that reunites the members of Miles's second great quintet (Shorter, Hancock, Carter, Williams) to rethink the good old days. In a sense, every jazz player carries with him his own version of Miles, like the smiling statuettes of Buddha the devout are said to lug about. Not surprisingly, Keith Jarrett's Miles resembles Keith Jarrett. Davis was a master of empty space, and Jarrett, his onetime pianist, never met a note he didn't like, but on his new Miles album *Bye Bye Blackbird* (ECM) Jarrett channels his virtuosity into a credible, if abstract, homage.

Tenor saxophonist Joe Henderson gives a more literal reading of Miles in a masterly new album, *So Near So Far* (Musings for Miles), on Verve. Taken mostly from the late 1950s and early 1960s songs like "Miles Ahead" and "Pfrancing" sound as if they've been passed through a

filter that has taken out the grit and the acid and the imperiousness of Miles and left intact the gorgeous melodies, to be explored by Henderson with his customary intelligence. The album has a curious, if artificial, lightness to it, in part created by John Scofield's shimmering electric guitar, which takes the place, harmonically, of a piano. It's Miles all right, but he is smiling.

Of course, leave it to the real Miles to have the last word, even from the grave. Warner Brothers has just released the recording of his last concert from the summer of 1991, *Live at Montreux Festival*. At Montreux for the first time in thirty years, Miles returned to the great orchestral arrangements of Gil Evans, all the way back to *Birth of the Cool*. We hear Miles going twelve rounds with his younger self and emerging with pride that defining Milesian attribute, intact.

—JOSEPH HOOPER

MILESTONES: It's standing room only as the jazz greats pay recorded tribute to the master.



His *Musings for Miles* is noisy, full of angles, and dirtily enjoyable.

Right now, John Mooney looks formidable. Born in Rochester, New York, moved to New Orleans, Mooney, who's thirty-eight, learned from Son House, who also supposedly inspired Robert Johnson, certifying him sufficiently trad. But it's Mooney's modernist, Crescent City sense of play that sets him apart. In a genre of overkill growlers and chopmeisters who make Jerry Garcia seem terse, Mooney sings sly in the Professor Longhair mode (he covers Percy Sledge and Blind Willie Johnson back to back, no sweat) and doles out his slide guitar in small, you could say stungy, but very tasty portions. He's a canny package. Mooney's latest disc, *Testimony* (Viceroy), is an eclectic breakthrough.

Then there's the strange case of Dave Hole. Talk about getting away from the source, this cat has barely ever been out of his hometown, which happens to be Perth, Australia. Water drains in the opposite direction down under there, so Hole grips his slide over the top. Whatever there's no more explosive blues guitar player in the world. His *Short Fuse Blues* (Alligator), a self-recorded effort that Hole mailed unsolicited to *Guitar Player* magazine, is a nonstop assault: a moto-dex clap up side the head. He sings a tad Crocodile Dundee, but it doesn't matter.

Still, an Australian can't be King of the White Blues, can he? Let's give it to Mooney for now, along with the caveat that Mooney says this is a dumb idea. "White blues is kind of a cult," he jokes. "So I'll be king of the cult. That mean I've got to stay inside a compound and say I'm Jesus? No thanks." ■

GARY PANTER

JOHN MARZANI: Second Run

Whatever Happened to New American Cuisine?

I KNEW IT WAS the end of the line for New American Cuisine when a Boston chef I'd once praised as the finest interpreter of modern New England cuisine moved to Los Angeles and served me Tunisian briks, Sephardic hams, and Spanish caca for dinner.

L.A. does weird things to chefs' heads. In no time they abandon American cooking for the cuisine of the month, which at the moment seems to be a witches' brew of Mediterranean, Caribbean, Pacific Rim stuff like mango confit over Moroccan couscous with Burmese fish sauce and shaved Alba truffles. But what can you expect when even tradition-bound Gourmet declares that "American food is what Americans eat"? That's like saying American cars are what Americans drive. Such innuendo encourages chefs to turn their backs on a culinary heritage as diverse as Louisiana, jambalaya, Carolina barbecue, Texas chili, Arizona chimichangas, and New York cheesecake.

A few "old timers" like Larry Forgione of An American Place in New York, Tim Anderson of the Palace in Cincinnati, Elizabeth Terry of Elizabeth on 4th in Savannah, and Frank Stitt III of Highlands Bar & Grill in Birmingham are still dedicated to the notion that American cuisine can be among the finest on earth.

But you'll look far and wide to find young cooks who aren't heading off into the murky water of eclecticism. Fortunately, a few notable talents are keeping the faith.

NEW KIDS ON THE BAYOU

IN NEW ORLEANS Greg and Mary Sonnier have taken Cajun cooking to a new, far more digestible level at their tiny and personable **Gabriele** (3201 Esplanade Avenue, 504-948-0244), with richly flavored renditions of crab meat gumbo with smoked corn, roast chicken with crawfish cornbread dressing, and double fudge brownie cake with chocolate sauce and peppermint ice cream.

MAY REPLACE SEX IN OUR TIME

THE HOTTEST PLACE in San Francisco is the high-volume **One Market** (1 Market

Street, 415-777-8811), not just for chef Stephen Simmons's fried sand dabs with malt vinegar waffle chips, but because people have been known to faint with pleasure over Sheila Cervelloni's sensuous chocolate bread pudding and her banana split with cheesecake ice cream.

NOTHING COULD BE FINER

THAN TO BE in Durham, North Carolina, when Ben and Karen Barker of **Magnolia Grill** (102 Ninth Street, 919-286-3069) are cooking up dishes like red snapper with low-country red rice cakes and smoked pepper crayfish remoulade, grilled shrimp with country ham and pickled pepper relish on grits, and warm butter almond cake with tart cherry compote and vanilla ice cream.

PATRIOT GAME: Waddy Malouf fires up New York venison top and snowshoe hare left at the Hudson River Club. His cream salade below left.



A RIVER RUNS BY IT

AT NEW YORK'S elegant **Hudson River Club** (250 Vesey Street, 212-780-1501), chef Waddy Malouf has dedicated himself to using the provender of the great river valley just outside the window for sumptuous dishes like braised snowshoe hare with morels and fresh noodles, venison chops in New York Cabernet vinaigrette, Indian pudding with ginger, corn bread, cranberry, and custard, and a patriotic ice cream dessert complete with a chocolate replica of the Statue of Liberty, which you can see in the harbor from any table in the place.



Flavor meat with spicy vinegar, herbs & oil, or wine. Salt draws juices out of burgers; don't use it unless you prefer that yummy "cardboard" consistency.



A famous gourmet wraps patties around ice so the center stays juicy while the edges sear. Most people, on the other hand, simply make sure the patty is no less than 3/4" thick.



Add flavor to meat with ground carrots, nuts, seeds, mushrooms or bean sprouts. Foul it gently, rough kneading turns burgers into hockey pucks on a bun.



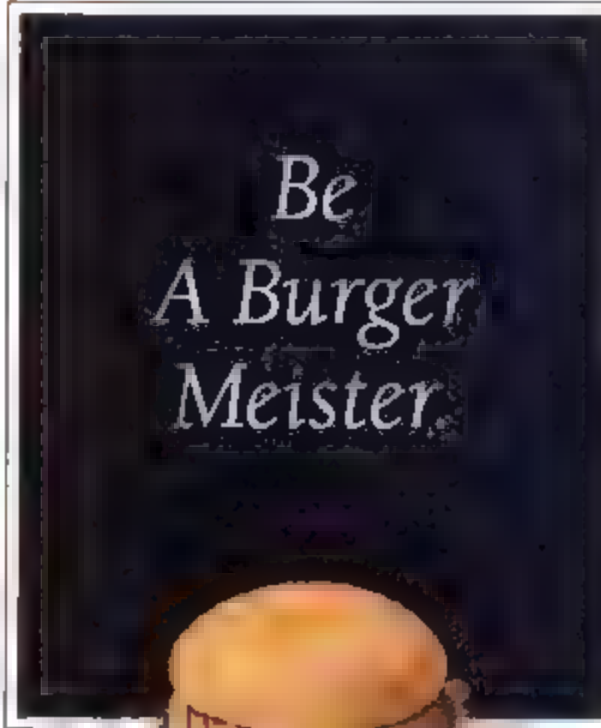
Burgers can be made from fish, lamb, venison, chicken, sausage, and even certain vegetables. Tofu with minced nut burger, anyone? Anyone?



Toss moistened herbs, unshelled walnuts or citrus rinds on the coals to give the meat a distinct flavor. Some cowboys used dried cowchips but, well, to each his own.



Designer hardwoods are in, but beware of softwoods. White mesquite produces honey-flavored smoke; pine exudes a unique "eau de turpentine" nuance.



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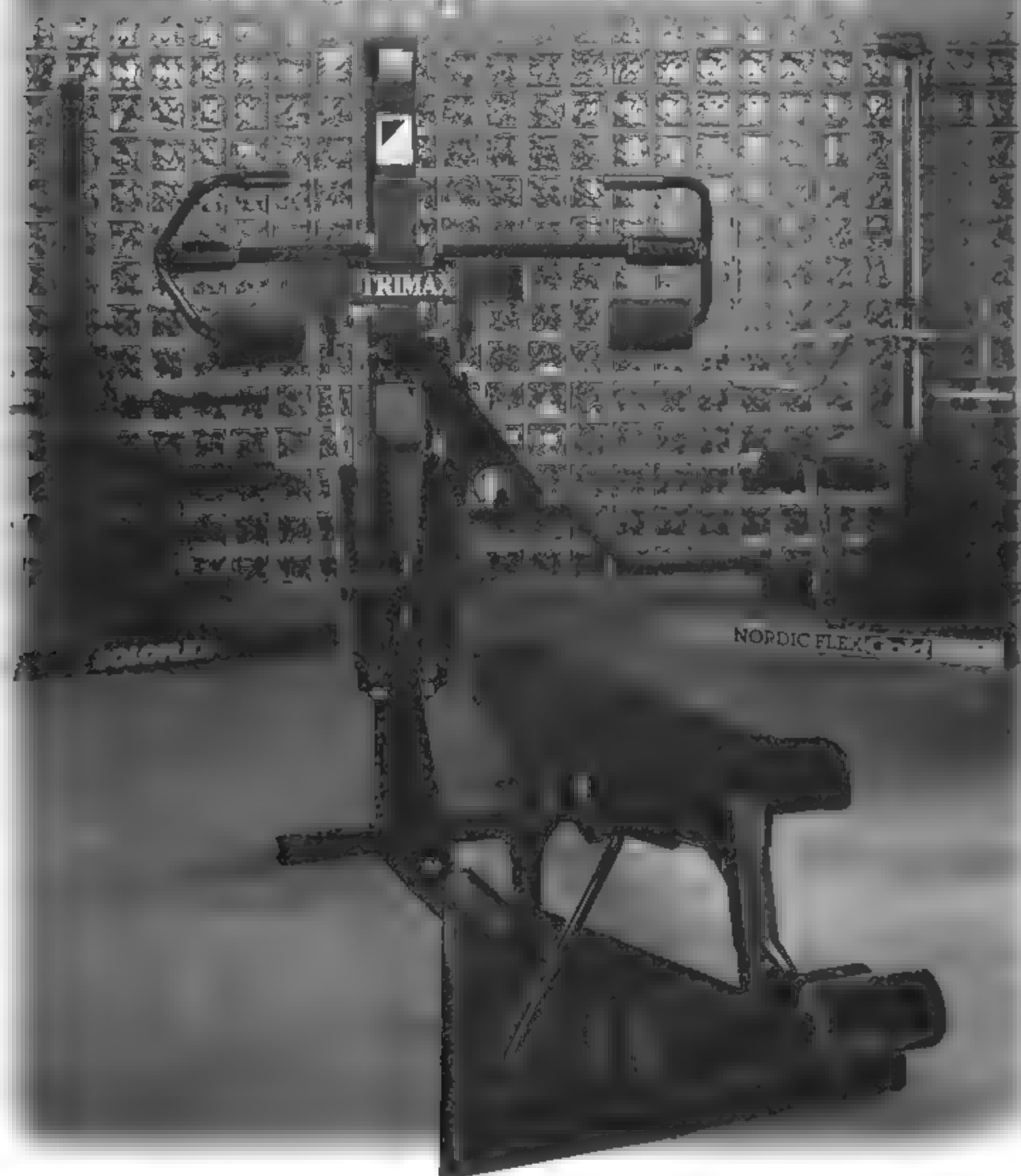
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AMERICAN SCENE: TAD FRIEND

Garry Shandling's Alter Ego Trip



Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. Alec Baldwin and Garry Shandling rehearse.

ALEC BALDWIN WAITS outside the hallway for his cue. And waits. Baldwin's outrageous good looks have drawn the entire staff of *The Larry Sanders Show* to rehearsal; inside, confusion reigns. "Alec's a little down," Garry Shandling stage-whispers across the hallway. "He thought he was going to be the handsomest guy on the set. He looked at me..." Shandling mimes a crestfallen look and everyone cracks up.

At last Baldwin steps back in "Larry," he says in his distinctive soft, gravelly voice.

"Alec," Shandling says, as Larry Sanders. He ad-libs, "Lozenge?" Everyone breaks up again as Baldwin looks politely puzzled. "A little scratch in my throat," Shandling says, patting his Adam's apple insincerely.

They rehearse, walking toward the talk-show set. Baldwin, assured in a dark-blue suit, playing himself as a talk-show guest. Shandling, jittery in jeans and a PRO GYM T-shirt, playing the late-night talk-show host who has just been divorced by his second wife and started dating his first, Francine. In this episode, "The List," Francine tells Larry that after their divorce she dated Baldwin, and in this scene, Baldwin reminisces about Francine—"Man, we had some wild times together"—until Larry finally suggests, "Hey, listen. Let's not bring Francine up on the air." (Flustered, Larry himself mentions it on the show and discovers that Ed Begley, sitting beside Baldwin, was involved with her too. Larry and Francine then mulishly draw up lists of their sexual partners.)

Baldwin nails his lines, and Shandling—who's also dead-on, his face a threadbare blanket of civility over a quilt of wincing and smirks—

seems to feel a male threat. His ad-libs become fiercer, more confrontational, a wolf lurks in that sheepish clothing. But Baldwin, growling dialogue inaudibly, proves well armored in technique and testosterone.

"Have you seen the guy who plays the piano with his ass?" Shandling asks as Larry, referring to another talk-show guest.

"No," Baldwin says tersely.

Sanders's line is "Come on." Instead, Shandling ad-libs dismissively, "Why don't you go find him?" The scene is over, but everyone seems frozen.

Baldwin moves in. "You're a bully." He throws a few shadow punches. "A comedy bully, that's your rep."

"No, no, I'm a nice guy," Shandling cries, throwing up placating hands. "I'm weak—I strike back at others." After a measuring pause, they redo the last exchange. When Shandling asks if he's seen the piano player, Baldwin ad-libs, "Yes, I have."



CAUGHT IN HIS ACT: Why did Garry Shandling stay with *The Larry Sanders Show* and pass up doing *Late Night*? Hey, now! Sometimes art is more interesting than fame.

DARRYL ESTRINE

JULY 1993 ESQUIRE 35

"That's funny," Shandling says. "That works." Backed against the curtain, he squirms his neck sideways. "You're a very attractive man." "Thank you," Baldwin says formally, projecting enormous force. "You're a comedic bully."

I catch Baldwin going out, introduce myself, and say, "I understand you're a big fan of the show." Baldwin looks quizzical. "Garry said your agent called saying you'd love to be on." (Indeed, Shandling had said, "I spoke to Alec Baldwin for half an hour, and I was shocked by how much he wanted to do the show.")

"He said that?" Baldwin's face tightens. "Come here." He marches in front of me the thirty yards across the talk-show set to where Shandling sits amid a dozen writers, producers, and actors. Baldwin's footfalls approach into growing silence. "This guy says you said I called you up to be on the show," he barks at Shandling. "Did you say that?"

Shandling flinches and slowly shakes his head. "No, no." Baldwin rounds on me. "Okay, thanks." He stalks off. "They don't like to seem eager, like they called us," Shandling at last explains softly. "It's just the business."

Some boring background stuff you should know. Fiction with real-life consequences—and vice versa is the core of *The Larry Sanders Show*, which returned to HBO this June for its second season, airing Wednesday nights at 10 P.M. It's been hailed by critics—*The Los Angeles Times* called Sanders "an instant TV classic"; *The Washington Post* declared it "the next step in the evolution of the television talk show and a contribution to the betterment of viewerkind"—and in Hollywood, where entertainers are vying to guest-star and collude in their own sliming. Carol Burnett, Dana Carvey, and Billy Crystal, among many others, have appeared mocking themselves, but the show's writers also take swipes at Charlton Heston's wigs, Barbara Hershey's lips, Sean Young's instability, and everything about Jerry Van Dyke.

Garry Shandling, the show's creator, executive producer, supervising writer, and lead actor, has fashioned a scary X-ray of popular entertainment—from the talk show's inanely chipper theme music to its nuanced dissection of the protocols of deference between peons and stars to the savage off-camera agendas.

(During a commercial break, sotto voce.)

LARRY You're not going to do Arsenio or Leno, are you?

ROBIN WILLIAMS I've got to.

LARRY You fucker.

ROBIN Hey, it's a business, get used to it. Blow me.

Shandling has seen such conversations from both sides of the desk. After writing for *Sanford and Son* and *Welcome Back Kotter* in the 1970s, he became a very successful stand-up, apprenticed to Johnny Carson as permanent guest-host of *The Tonight Show* from 1987 to 1988, and has hosted the Grammy Awards three times. His Showtime sitcom, *It's Garry Shandling's Show* (1986 to 1990), was about "Garry Shandling," who lived in a duplicate of Shandling's living room and whose worries—dating and his loser hair—were Shandling's own.

But those who've praised Sanders for deconstructing itself like *It's Garry Shandling's Show* are mistaken. "People think because we say fuck and show celebrity backstage stuff that it's all new," says head writer Paul Simms. "Actually, our story lines are very conventional, and we avoid technique: no flashbacks, dream sequences, distractingly stylistic camera angles. It's just that in the last third of the episode, we put in some unconventional turns."

"Like in the episode with David Spade [a comedian who does Leno just before he is scheduled on Sanders]. Most sitcoms would end with the scene we have where David Spade blames bad advice from his manager and agent, and Larry promises to have him on in a few months, having realized that David's a younger version of himself. We keep going [Spade smugly tells a friend, 'I gave him that whole manager-agent shit,' and Larry murmurs to his executive producer, 'We'll bump him a few times and he'll get the message.']. Then, when Joe Pesci cancels and Larry has David Spade on that night after all," Simms says, "you realize the business is all about needing three guests a night, and morality and integrity go out the window."

Hollywood relentlessly devours its Jeremiahs, and in late April, with no

irony, NBC offered Shandling \$5 million a year to succeed David Letterman at the 12:35 A.M. *Late Night* talk show. Shandling's manager Brad Grey, had extensive discussions with NBC, and for ten days, amid a frenzy of media speculation, Grey and NBC believed the deal would happen. But Shandling—who hopes to film his movie about an alien for Columbia Pictures this fall and who feels his creative future lies in that direction—privately assured his Sanders staff he wasn't going anywhere.

Three days before he turned down NBC—and, at that morning's "table read," pretended to weep about how much money he was giving up—Shandling told me the factors influencing his decision. "First and second is creative challenge—I'm concerned that after three months I might get bored on a talk show. *Lifestyle* is third—the daily-grind factor. A talk show is forty-two weeks a year, and you're committed for three years. Creative control is fourth. Money is fifth—make

that greed. No, make it money. Fame is sixth. Sex is seventh—the better I feel about myself the sexier I am. And eighth is parking spots. By that list," he admitted, "it wouldn't be a hard decision."

According to some observers, Shandling kept the talks going in part to garner attention for himself and for Sanders, which he felt HBO had underpublicized. But he continues to weigh doing a 12:35 A.M. CBS talk show in the fall of 1994 (NBC later clumsily denied wooing Shandling before Conan O'Brien—see page 68—because the network feared a sudden Shandling coup from CBS). Still, he worries that "I'd have to do a new concept, beyond a desk and a couch, or I'd become one of the people I've been satirizing," and wonders if an unscripted Shandling show could match Sanders's meticulously scripted "reality."

"*The Larry Sanders Show* really does have the feel, style, and substance of what I do for a living each day," says David Letterman, whose pained smirk informs the Sanders character as much as does Johnny Carson's emotional distance, stiff-necked sideways glances, and serial wives. "I said to myself, 'Their little

NBC believed the deal would happen. But Shandling assured his staff he wasn't going anywhere.



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pretend talk show looks better than my real talk show—how do they do that?"

Monday, 12:15 p.m. A conversation in Kathryn Harrold's dressing room. "At the first table read I was terrified," says Harrold, the actress just hired to play Francine. "The character was humorless and kind of angry—exasperated was her chief stage direction—so I was afraid she would be as judgmental and one-dimensional as his last wife, Jeanne." Harrold, a striking meld of fine-boned grace and sexy neurosis, perches on her chair like a chain-smoking wren. "But Garry understands and nurtures anxiety, and so far the show is an actor's dream. In the first episode I give Mike Ovitz the finger because Larry keeps sucking up to him in a restaurant. Doesn't that need to be done?" Doubt overtakes her. "I hope it doesn't hurt my career—no, he'll laugh. And he's Garry's agent."

Shandling arrives in Kathryn Harrold's doorway. "So, what've you been saying?" he asks, sagging against the doorframe. Behind purple-tinted sunglasses he is always mildly exhausted. Shandling and Harrold have just come from the table read of the writer's draft. Shandling, "concerned" that Maya Forbes's witty script didn't make Larry and Francine's relationship textured and plausible, wants to discuss it with Harrold before they begin the three days of rehearsal that precede filming on Thursday and Friday. "It's been a challenge for me to write a true female character," he would say later, "to make her as complete a human being as the man."

"Am I fired?" Harrold asks. It's not an entirely neurotic question. In just over a year, Shandling has already disposed of one stage wife and five head writers, many of whom vanished because they didn't share Shandling's vision or his collaborative work habits.

Shandling comes and sits on the couch, his head sinking telescopically into his neck. "Maybe you'd best step outside," he tells me. When I start to rise, he shakes his head. "Joke." He stares at me for at least seven seconds, winces, then stretches his left arm and makes a vague grasping motion in the

air. "See, this is how you deal with the press," he tells Harrold in the lowered register that indicates his absolute seriousness. "Be incredibly cautious, very specific, and don't babble, because it'll end up differently in print."

"Are you kidding?" she asks. "Take off those sunglasses, you're making me paranoid."

The glasses stay on.

Monday, 2:30 p.m. Jeffrey Tambor and Linda Doucett rehearse in Hank Kingsley's office.

"When they tell me I can't have the rotating floor—it's so frustrating," says Tambor, the actor who plays Larry's Ed McMahon-like sidekick, Hank Kingsley. In this first scene of the episode's subplot, Hank's assistant, Darlene (played by Garry Shandling's girlfriend of six years, Linda Doucett), explains to Hank his business manager's financial concerns about Hank's plan for a revolving restaurant, Hank's Look-A Round

Café. As written the scene is expository, an arrow fired at the closing joke.

HANK: Fine, then I'll get investors. It just so happens that I'm on a first-name basis with some of the most powerful, influential people in this business. [Beat.] Darlene, get Chuck Woolery on the phone.

Doucett, a slim blonde uneasy with improvisation, plays straight woman while Tambor brings the scene alive. Tambor inflates the bald, pudgy Kingsley with Dickensian comic earnestness, exemplified when Hank whispered to Robin Williams, "When you said my head reminded you of your penis after a cold swim, I was honored." But in this scene Tambor also reveals naiveté, even pathos. "Hank thinks of himself as a misunderstood Mies van der Rohe, as I M Pei," Tambor discovers. "He could cry—he's close to madness!"

The following day, Tambor protests to Shandling because the writers have changed his joke line to "Get that schmuck Chuck Woolery on the phone." "Hank's need and vulnerability are lost," Tambor says beseechingly.

"I'd like to hear this new joke," Shandling replies. "I think it's very fun-

ny." Tambor does it the schmuck way. "See, Jeffrey, that's funny—funny!"

"But it's meanspirited," Tambor says with infinite sadness. "Hank isn't is he?"

Shandling, who often leaves the acting through-line to pursue the bright lantern of a new joke, yet who contrarily frets that "comedians use jokes to cover up their emotional lives," finally agrees. But he clearly thinks the old joke perilously broad. During the camera rehearsal, when Tambor delivers the unschmucked Chuck Woolery line, Shandling waggles his fingers idly at Pau Simms and whispers, "Real, real subtle."

After rehearsal Jeffrey Tambor explains Hank Kingsley. "I went to see *The Tonight Show*, and it burned the character into me," Tambor says, walking onto the empty talk-show set to demonstrate McMahon, the booming Ed-like chuckle, the heavy-haunched announcer's apologetic. "Then, when I first said, 'Hey, now!' the way Ed says 'Hey, oh!' I understood the rest of the character, the pure puffery. It means nothing, nothing I love saying it. When Hank's uncomfortable, 'Hey, now' [small voice]. When he sees a pretty girl 'Hey, now!' [enthusiastic]. When he just has nothing else to say 'Hey, now' [blank]. He's an egregious toady." Tambor returns to sit beside me. "But bottom line, he's a gentleman, he stands up when a woman leaves the table. And bottom line, the secret I wrote on my first script: He's lonely."

Monday, 4:30 p.m. A conversation with Rip Torn.

"Sit at Larry's desk," Torn says, "and interview me like a host." He sits in the first chair, looking out toward the notional audience. Torn plays Arthur, Larry's all-knowing executive producer, a character loosely based on Carson's executive producer Freddie de Cordova. "The character was written courtly and witty, more like Fred Friendly," Torn says. "I play him as fatherly to Larry, then courtly once he's pushed Larry too far, but I also play him as a savage street guy, a tough hombre."

A wonderful actor perhaps best known for his role as Albert Brooks's blustery attorney in *Defending Your Life*, Torn has an astonishing forehead. His eyebrows lift and goggle, then plummet faster than Wile E. Coyote's anvil. Torn also has a gift for wild-man improvisations. (When Arnie was supposed to



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scold his druggie son in a restaurant. Torn instead stabbed a joint out on his tongue and then swallowed it. And he evokes a mythic past, memorably, he once told the writers that he was "carrying a big bag full of yesterday on my shoulder."

But Torn's eloquent forehead is often masked by a black engineer's cap

rugged broodingly over his eyes, and he's prone to rage. "Rip scares the fuck out of me," says one Sanders actor. And Torn is surpassingly singular even for an actor. Whatever question I ask about the show's relationships returns with the same auction-style answers. "Billy Crystal and Robin Williams complimented me on my comic timing. I

always stood out in *On the Choice* with Bob Hope and Lucille Ball and *Summer Rental* with John Candy. I've directed on Broadway and had my own theater for nine years.

"I've been fired or replaced more than anyone in the business." Torn confesses, gazing lovingly out at the empty red seats, "but they've never found any one to match me."

Tuesday, 4:00 a.m. A conversation with Linda Doucett. "On our first date I said 'I kind of like you like I'm being interviewed,'" says Doucett. "And Garry said, 'I'll be right back after this commercial.'" We're sitting in the guest chairs on the talk show set, a magnet for the actors. "They used that bit this year when Larry has a date with Helen Hunt, but Garry's usually very disciplined about boundaries. Is that a man thing?"

"And last year the episode when Larry and Jon Lovitz are joking over dinner and Jeannie doesn't get to say anything? That's like a few years ago in Maui, when we were out to dinner with Robin Williams, Billy Crystal, and the wives. The guys were running into the kitchen to get our food, rifling off each other, jamming, and the wives didn't get a chance to say much. But afterward, I'm sure all the men asked them, 'Was I funny? Was I funnier?' I think that's true for a lot of women with comedians—I don't think an accountant asks his wife, 'Do you think this balance sheet works?'"

Shandling comes over and sits behind Larry Sanders's desk, inscrutable in shades. Long silence. "Remember that dinner in Maui?" Doucett finally asks, curling her legs beneath her. We discuss it briefly, and Garry says, "I called Billy and Robin up afterward and left a message on their machines. Call back if you think I'm funny. They didn't." Garry

"I make sure Larry is very different," Shandling says. "He's forty-two. Garry is forty-three."

laughs with Linda, tutting his head toward her affectionately. Engagingly, and unlike many comedians, Shandling enjoys his own jokes.

(Later Shandling would add, with the unguessed armature of a comedian who's been in therapy, that his insecurity "comes from the self-destruct mechanism that I'm working on controlling. I'm not good enough, sexy enough, funny enough, charming enough, smart enough, and in a relationship, intimate enough, open enough, caring enough." There is a humming tension between Shandling's Zen meliowness and his razor humor, which routinely slices the inner tube of his own self-inflated new-age man.)

"Then we were talking about Garry/Larry," Linda offers. That boundary intrigues almost everyone, Dana Carvey kept calling Shandling "Ga Larry."

"Actually, there's very little difference," suggests Janeane Garofalo, who plays Paula, Larry's talent booker. "When Larry tries to reach out, he is Garry. They both finally realize that it blows to be dealing with people. And you don't get where Garry is without being hardworking and ambitious like Larry. Garry's self-deprecating, aw-shucks attitude fronts for a huge ego and goals. I suspect that if he let the id go, it would be sheer animal insanity. But he doesn't. Garry's harshest on himself. The big difference is that Garry's much less sexual than Larry, much less flirty, which I think is great. Garry seems embarrassed by sex."

Shandling's line is that "Larry is a little more smartass, a little more negative, a little more driven, a little less self-aware. Larry would do a kung fu character on the show, whereas I would only do a spoof of a guy doing a kung fu character." "I make sure Larry is very different," Shandling says to me now.

"He's forty-two, where Garry is forty-three. The struggle is to play a year younger. My acting coach says try to remember what you were doing a year ago." He giggles and starts to walk off, then returns to pat the jar of Q-Tips on Larry's desk. "These are on the house."

"I think that was Larry," Doucett says after Shandling leaves. Another long silence. "Now I get to be a little piece in Garry's vision," she adds. Then, softly, "As I said in *People*, I wanted a baby and he gave me a job."

Wednesday, 11:00 a.m. Garry Shandling and Kathryn Harrold rehearse in Larry's bedroom. Harrold and Shandling are sitting on the bed a foot apart, eating Chinese food, and Garry improves rather plaintively, "Why aren't you touching me?"

"My hands were burned in a terrible accident," Harrold says nervously.

"Does gum disease begin as a headache?" Shandling asks, apropos of nothing. "You're so cute and funny," says Harrold, meaning the opposite. She touches him.

"Why do I feel like the cheapest date in town?" Harrold says, starting the scene as Francine—a reference to the Chinese food. She stops, clutching a pillow. "That's not a great line. I don't like this dynamic of you saying funny things and me policing you back in to be serious."

The daily rewrites have made Francine more winsome, and after exhausting rehearsals Shandling and Harrold have edged into a tentative, jokey sexual heat, but this is still the exact problem that afflicted Larry's previous wife.

Gathering verve, Harrold fights her way back into the scene, which winds down with Francine saying that after their few dates, Alec Baldwin started seeing "that girl from *Northern Exposure* [Janine Turner]."

LARRY She's hot.
FRANCINE She is not. That short hair and that mole on the side of her head.

LARRY That's the sexy part. I know. I went out with her. How does that make you feel?

"That's great," this week's director (and Shandling and Harrold's acting coach), Roy London, says, panting and reddening, which is how he expresses pleasure. "You can go even further with the hurt jealousy."



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AMERICAN SCENE: TAD FRIEND

Never loath to improv, Shandling says, "You know, she was great. When I fucked her she was really tight."

"Then she'd be perfect for you," Harold shoots back.

"Hey!" Shandling says admiringly. "You're not someone to be toyed with, are you?"

Pilow to her chest, Harold looks triumphant.

Wednesday, 3:00 a.m. A second, briefer conversation with Rip Torn. During a break, Torn scowls from beneath his black cap and asks me, "You ever see *Riviera* [a country- and western cult film not among the twenty-eight films on Torn's actor's b.o.]?" "I'm afraid not."

He snakes his script at me. "Ah, you don't know my work!" he says, and strides from the building.

Thursday, 3:30 p.m. A conversation with writers Judd Apatow, Maya Forbes, and Brad Isaacs in Forbes's office. "I like desperation," says Apatow. "The desperation of Larry trying to handle all his guests who've done Francine, of Hank trying to sell his rotating café—it's a Ralph Kramden emotion." They're talking about Sanders's wellspring passions, while trying to brainstorm a good celebrity for Larry's assistant to sneek aloud when she reads his list of sexual partners (Rebecca DeMornay having already denied permission).

"Chris Thompson [a former head writer] used to say the show ran on ego, greed, and fear," says Forbes, "but I like shame."

"Shame drives Hank," Brad Isaacs says. "Down deep he'd like to be more like Larry, because he knows that women are always setting for him, that he's a fallback." Pause. "Joan Jett?"

"Pat Benatar?" Forbes asks. "And love."

"When it comes down to it," Apatow says, "Artie loves Larry more than the show—"

"But it's also his job," Isaacs says. "If Larry spontaneously combusted, Artie would soon be loving another host."

"What's great about this show," Apatow remarks, "is that no one ever means what they say, the characters are wrong-headed, and then it just ends." "Adrienne Barbeau," Forbes replies. "Tone Fields," Apatow counters. Forbes goes, "Rrrrr!"—a 1960s sex kitten purr she regularly employs to alarm the other writers into creativity.

"Artie's paternal toward Larry," Isaacs

says. "but maybe Francine and Artie will end up competing for Larry's wife's attentions." The idea that show business is a jealous lover dances teasingly in the show's subtext, waiting to be made explicit. "It'll be about seeing who can give him the biggest orgasm," Isaacs continues enthusiastically. "Artie in his monologue or Francine in bed. Larry can stay hard for about four minutes in both venues." Beat. "Waylon Flowers and Madame?"

Thursday, 6:00 a.m. Filming with Garry Shandling and Rip Torn in Larry's office. Shandling, seated behind Larry's desk, is trying to get into a complicated scene with Torn. It has not gone well, and before the sixth take Roy London hovers over Shandling, fussing.

"I've found out what irritates me," Shandling says to London. "It's you." Everyone goes, "Oooh!" Shandling throws his arms out and says, "You know I'm just doing that as a technique, a move to get into Larry, don't you?"

"Sure," London says, stepping back and reddening but not panting, which is how he expresses dismay. "Sure, of course."

"Fine," Shandling says, "now go fuck yourself." Beat. "Garry loves you, Roy, it's Larry who hates your guts."

Friday, 6:00 a.m. Filming with Garry Shandling, Alec Baldwin, Jeffrey Tambor, and Ed Begley on the talk-show set. Abby Adams and Jeff Jacobs, who are observing the filming, have the chill holographic shimmer of CAA agents. And that, I discover when we're introduced, is what they are. As agents for two Sanders writers, they're here to monitor their investment.

"Hello," I say.

"Hello," Adams says. "Off the record."

"Hello is off the record?"

"Everything is off the record."

Meanwhile, Shandling is convulsing Begley and Baldwin with dirty jokes just before the take. When Shandling steps off-camera for one shot, Baldwin looks over mistrustfully. "You going to fuck me up again?"

"I'll tell you how big my penis is," Shandling responds. "I'll tell you how big my penis is—but remember, because it's television, I measure diagonally."

"Hey, now!" Tambor says. "Everyone's loose, rolling."

Shandling comes over to Adams and Jacobs to shake hands, then asks

Tex-Mex Chops

4 boneless pork chops, about 3/4 inch thick
1 teaspoon vegetable oil
1 cup salsa, chunky style, purchased
1 can 4 ounces diced green chiles, undrained

Large skillet over medium-high heat. Brown chops on one side about 2 minutes. Turn chops, add salsa and chiles to skillet. Lower heat, cover and simmer gently for 8-10 minutes. Serves four.
Approximately per serving: Calories 202, Fat 9 gm, Cholesterol 68 mg.
Serve with buttered corn and cucumber & red onion salad.

*Nutrient analysis done by The Food Processor II Diet Analysis Software
Program from USDA, Harborside, Inc., 1991.

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AMERICAN SCENE: TAD FRIEND

what I thought of the hallway scene he'd just filmed with Baldwin. By now he's relaxed around me, become friendly, but his question indicates no particular favor. Shandling is timorous for consulting with everyone, even the guy who cleans his pool.

Very funny," I say truthfully. "It really lifted off compared to Monday's table read."

"You didn't like it at the table read?" he asks. This was something we'd talked about. "When I compliment a friend, I repeat a few times if I really meant it because so often people don't." Shandling had said, "I did Arsenio and he told me he really loved the show." Pause. "I don't believe him." And Dave Letterman called and told me he really loved my show, and I raved back about his show. Can you see I'm sure we both hung up wondering if the other guy was sincere." Or as Shandling put it during the Museum of Television and Radio's salute to the show (speaking as usual more quotably before an audience). "It was two fairly embarrassed guys figuring that each was jerking the other one off."

"No," I say trying to rid me of my sincerity. "I just thought you and Alec really added a lot in rehearsal."

"Yes," Abby Adams chimes in enthusiastically. "It really lifted off. Very funny."

Garry turns to her. "Did you see it?"

"No."

Friday, 7:00 a.m. Eating takeout pasta in Garry Shandling's dressing room with Garry, Alec Baldwin, Ed Begley, Linda Doucett, Judd Apatow, and Brad Grey. "So we do a Jeffrey Dahmer joke," Shandling says to Begley and Baldwin. "If you suck a cock that's not attached, are you still gay?" Laughter.

"Can you do that on the show?" Begley asks.

"We did," Shandling says, "but I cut it in editing." Pause. "Honey is this cock in the refrigerator still good?"

"No, it's gone soft," Baldwin says with an air of disappointment.

"So here's something else I may still cut," Shandling says. "In the first episode Larry's reading *Variety's* list of Emmy nominations, and he's upset because he didn't get one, and Arthur is consoling him. So Larry reads *Saturday Night Live* and Artie says, 'Lorne Michaels [SNL's executive producer] has never met an ass he couldn't kiss.' Then Larry reads 'The Academy Awards with Billy Crystal' and Artie says, 'Billy Crystal would suck a

cock to win a sack race.'" Huge laughs. Alec Baldwin is almost on the floor. "Now of course no one would ever take that seriously but do you think Billy would be offended?"

"Yes," Begley says.

Brad Grey smiles privately. Earlier, Grey whose company co-owns the show, was talking with me about the question of offending celebrities when a runner handed him a phone message. Grey flipped it toward me. "Lorne called." He represents Michaels. "We take a shot at my friend Lorne, coming up," Grey said, shifting the gum around in his cheek. "We see if that stays in." His look was knowing, serene. "We don't want to hurt anybody, especially a friend."

"Do you have a popcorn machine in here?" Alec Baldwin asks.

"I know where that goes," Shandling says. "First it's 'Do you have a popcorn machine in here?' And then it's [seductive voice] 'What are you doing later?'"

"No," Baldwin says, trying to stay atop the situation. "I was going to give you a popcorn machine for your dressing room."

"That's very sweet," Garry says, almost willing to be touched. He's really enjoyed acting with Baldwin.

"I like you," Baldwin says sincerely. "You make it hard but I like you."

"Well, that would be great. But is this something you do to everyone?"

"No—"

"You go around giving out popcorn makers left and right?"

"No, it's just that all the big guys have popcorn machines," Baldwin says, fighting hard to maintain his Alec Baldwin cool. "You need a popcorn machine."

"So," Shandling says into the silence. "What are you doing later?"

Friday, 9:00 a.m. Taping the talk-show scenes before a live audience. "I had an unusual date the other night," Ed Begley tells Larry Sanders, knowing that this segment isn't being taped. "Is it customary to tip the shepherd?" The line made semifamous by an old *Tenight Show* writer, Pat McCormack, is Begley's nonscripted homage to talk shows. The audience largely pulled in from comedy clubs,

laughs but seems uncertain whether this is spontaneous, scripted, or somewhere in that entertainment netherworld that Hank Kingsley alludes to when he roundly intones "Live on tape from Hollywood." Is this real? Should one tip the shepherd?

Larry's next guest gets loud applause. Alec Baldwin. The audience is puzzled by the scripted dialogue about Francine (who hasn't yet been on the air) but laughs when Garry and Alec pore over the script on Garry's desk after a blown take. This, clearly, is live celebrity behavior. Between takes Shandling murmurs, "I really don't want to be here." He's been at the studio for fifteen hours, and now he mumbles in to the microphone, "I'm a fat, sweaty pig." Laughter. "And speaking of fat, sweaty pigs," he says

with a rising inflection, looking offstage, where Rip Torn and Kathryn Harrold are watching.

"Francine!" Harrold laughs, shaking her head. She watches Baldwin and Begley snap over Francine.

BALDWIN: You're sort of a scumbag, aren't you?

BEGLEY: You were the one who brought it up, my friend.

Ad libbing, Shandling says, "You're all scumbags. You're both scumbags. You're worse than scumbags, you're bad guests." He's cruising now, riffing easily, and the audience loves him.

Backstage, near midnight, Linda Doucett stands alone at the buffet table. "Still here?" I say lightly, just making conversation.

Doucett's forehead is furrowed. She listens to the distant applause as if deep in study for a tough exam. "If I don't stay til the end, he'll ask, 'Did you think this bit was funny? What about the joke about my balls?'" she says. "And then it'll be the one bit I didn't see."

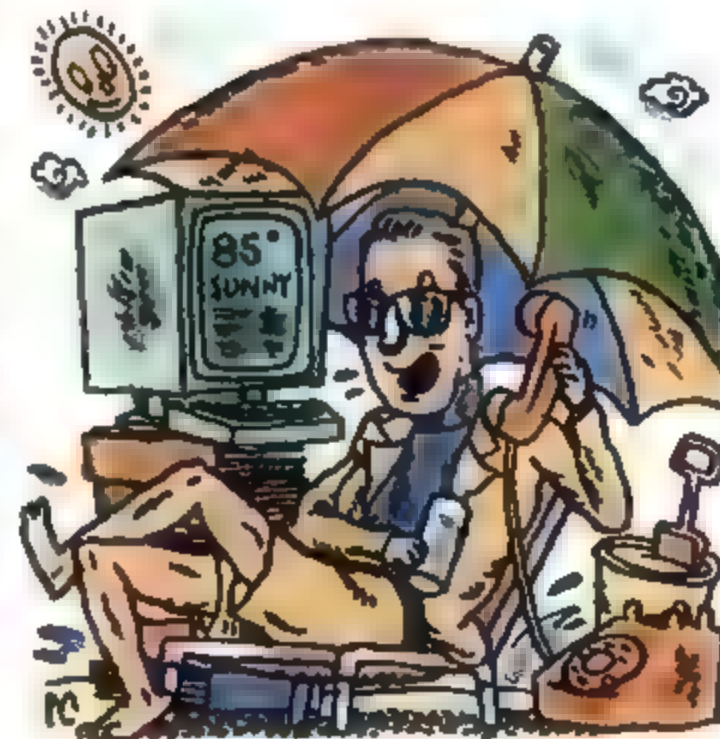
Epilogue. Adrienne Barbeau permitted her name to be shouted from Larry's list of sexual partners. The Billy Crystal and Lorne Michaels jokes were cut in editing. Garry Shandling did not receive a popcorn machine from Alec Baldwin.

"I had an unusual date," Ed Begley tells Larry. "Is it customary to tip the shepherd?"

PERSONAL SHOPPER

An Information Network

JULY — vacation time! — is the perfect month for me to let you in on my "No-Need-to-Spend-a-Fortune" wardrobe secrets. Let's face it, nothing pumps vacation spirits (and inspires that feeling of renewal!) more than a spruced-up summer wardrobe. With a few of my clever wardrobe tips — guaranteed to make heads turn — you'll never blow the airfare on beachwear again! Give me a call!



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Class Act. No wonder **SAMI DINAR** raises more eyebrows at the Peninsula Hotel than any other Beverly Hills retailer. Each guest of the hotel receives a gift certificate to Sami's nearby high-fashion men's boutique, and the fashionable Mr. Dinar throws in complimentary Rolls Royce car service back and forth. Who needs pillow mints?

Style Driven. After putting its distinctive mark on everything from sports wear to luggage, **NAUTICA** is now defining minivan chic with the Nautica Villager minivan from Ford Motors. Appearing soon at Lincoln Mercury dealers across the country, the two light blue minivan features the Nautica logo in yellow on sides, tail gate, and floor mats.

All That Jazz. **LOUIS, BOSTON** — the men's store in Boston that's home to designers like Dries Van Noten, Donna Karan, Garrick Anderson, Brioni, and Luciano Barbera — has an outdoor café that really swings. They've got

glasses by Bausch & Lomb deliver 100 percent protection from the harmful effects of ultraviolet rays. If you are a fashion-serious, health-conscious individual, Ray-Ban® sunglasses are your optical choice.

Close-ups. **LEICA'S** new lightweight 8 x 32 BA all-around binoculars will bring your summer into sharp focus. Sliding eyecups — specially designed for sunglasses and other eyewear — provide a full-field view.

Over Ice. Summer drinks are forever being re-created with catchy new names. But one classic never changes the **"CAMPARI SQUEEZE."** Its fantastic, refreshing taste plus its color — looks like a South Beach sunset — makes the recipe worth remembering. Mix 1/3 Campari with 2/3 freshly squeezed orange juice (steer clear of frozen concentrates!) and garnish with a wheel of fresh orange. For a quick fizz, add a splash of soda.

Faux Glow. Get that tan and healthy look without dangerous ultraviolet rays. **CLINIQUE'S** popular Self-Tanning Formula won't make you look like you've OD'd on carrot juice! Clinique's two brand new sun products provide SPF-25 and are waterproof — in spray form (which is alcohol free) and lotion.

Prince of Ties. I've got a limited supply of ties from Tommy Hilfiger's HOT new collection to give away. And I want to hear from you! So hurry and drop me a postcard (better yet, a summer vacation card!) and we'll pick the names in a random drawing. Include your name, address, and telephone number. Mail by August 15th to: Warren Christopher, c/o Esquire Magazine, 1790 Broadway, 10th Floor, NY, NY 10019.

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CHARTER

1. The who, you, do for me



Don't Cry for Me, Mike Krzyzewski



There's more Roy Williams of Kansas cried Steve Fisher of Michigan got a bit brubbery. Even Dean Smith, college basketball's Patton, got a little red-eyed, probably be-

Here's an Andre for you,
Coach Anatomically correct
Have a ball



Leon Lett. He is a Dallas Cowboy. But, bless his heart, I am pretty sure he wants to be a Dallas Cowboy cheerleader. On Super Bowl Sunday, against Buffalo, Lett picked up a fumble and went rumbling down the sideline in the Rose Bowl. He did not think anyone was close to him. Maybe Lett did not think. He began to go hip-hop on us, dancing and strutting the last few yards. He got caught by Don Beebe, the last member of the Bills still playing.

Lett fumbled.
It actually made me hot.
I've got an Andre for you. Leon. Run downfield. Start to dance. I'll fake it to you.

Bobby Bonilla. In his first season with the Mets, Bonilla wore earplugs to drown out the noise of airplanes flying over Shea Stadium. Then he made an error one day and, with his team trailing 7-0 in the first, called the press box to complain that the flashing E on the scoreboard was upsetting him. Later, finishing out a real Dale Carnegie job, he blamed the media for making his season look horrible. Right. I hit .249.

This new season was less than a month old when Bonilla threatened sportswriter Bob Klapisch, who had collaborated on a book about the 1992 season. "I will show you the Bronx right here," he told Klapisch before calling him a "faggot." The next day Bonilla admitted he hadn't even read the book.

Bonilla can suck his Andre on the hood of his car and use it as a big flood light while he's riding the mean streets of his new home, Greenwich, Connecticut.

Andre Agassi. You didn't think we'd forget to send an award to the home office in Las Vegas, did you? Last year in this very space we challenged Agassi to win a major tournament. We threatened to rename the awards in Christian Laetner's honor if the little guy didn't come through for us. Well, our challenge was still on the newsstands when Agassi reached the finals at Wimbledon. He played Goran Ivanisevic, whose nerves in the fifth set were more shredded than Andre's. Goran put one last, nervous volley into the net, and Agassi dropped to the hallowed ground of Centre Court in joy and relief.

Even I felt good for the kid. No Le. Agassi started to get up, but his coach, the noted self-promoter Nick Bolleteri, frantically waving his arms, told him to stay down. Make the whole

thing more dramatic for the folks at home. Give Bolleteri directing credit, but deliver the Andre to Andre. Even in his greatest moment, he had to have an angle. If he's smart, he'll hand the award to Bolleteri and tell him to run along.

The Buffalo Bills. Who knows? Maybe they intend to leave six or seven Super Sundays in their bloody wake. Save an Andre for Marv Levy, that hall-of-fire coach, and give the rest to his boys, the Super Bowl serial killers. Open these babies carefully, guys. There's money inside. Big money. If you get to another AFC championship game, I want you all to know something. There's more where that came from.

Time out! (Assuming I have one.)
Steve Fisher. We know what happened to poor Webber at the end of the North Carolina game. And we know that Jalen Rose, allegedly playing point guard for Michigan in that fateful moment, suddenly disappeared, entering college basketball's witness protection program. But what happened to Fisher? Where was he when Webber stood there taking all the heat?

Yo, Fish, listen up. You coaches pocket the big sneaker money because you are supposed to be doing smart coaching things in the huddle. If you don't do the job there, why do we need you? Hand an Andre to the Michigan coach. Give him a couple for his assistants. Next time they're supposed to get everybody's attention in a huddle, tell them to hit the players upside the head with them if they have to.

The ESPY Awards. Hey, I do some work for ESPN. And I like the folks who run the place. I can see how this whole concept—comprehensive awards for sports—seemed like a wonderful idea at the time. But I watched the show.

Lonesome Dove was shorter.
In future hostage situations, there's no need to use tear gas to smoke out the bad guys. Just show them the ESPYs. Here's how it's done, fellas: an Andre to ESPN.

Reggie White. Not since the Beatles played Shea in '65 was I so excited about a world tour. I mean, I only caught him

in New York and Washington, but I heard he was really awesome in Cleveland. First White becomes a free agent, then he starts auditioning cities, telling us that he's waiting for God (is that what

Leigh Steinberg is calling himself these days?) to tell him where to sign. God decides on Green Bay eventually. Every body's a bottom-line guy. Give that man an Andre. I hope it keeps him warm in December.

Mike Ditka. He is the self-proclaimed toughest guy in the universe. Could have liberated Kuwait by himself. He's a Bear. That's how he defines himself. A Chicago Bear. Yelled at McMahon. Yelled at Harbaugh. So, when he was fired, you thought there was an outside chance Iron Mike would take it like a man. Guess what?

Another weeping coach.
My favorite moment was when, in this choked-up voice, he started mangling the words to "My Way."

Here's an Andre, Ditka. Thanks for the memories, okay? That doesn't mean we want you to hum a few bars.
Deion Sanders. I agree that Sanders hitting the ball up the gap and streaking to third is a breathtaking sight. I interviewed him once and thought he was smart and charming too. It turns out he'd rather ride around in the Nike jet and stalk Tim McCarver in the clubhouse with a bucket of ice water. Here's a bucket of water for you, kid. The Andre's at the bottom. Stick your head in there until you come up with it.

Marge Schott. Marge's problems—and they are too numerous to catalogue here—started when she got caught calling some of her Cincinnati Reds ballplayers "dumb niggers." Then there was the Nazi armband and her little problem recalling whether she had said Hitler had some good ideas.

I think that the old girl just had some trouble articulating mainstream baseball thinking. We're giving her an Andre for her troubles. Maybe she wants to put it on the front lawn, replacing that cute little jockey.

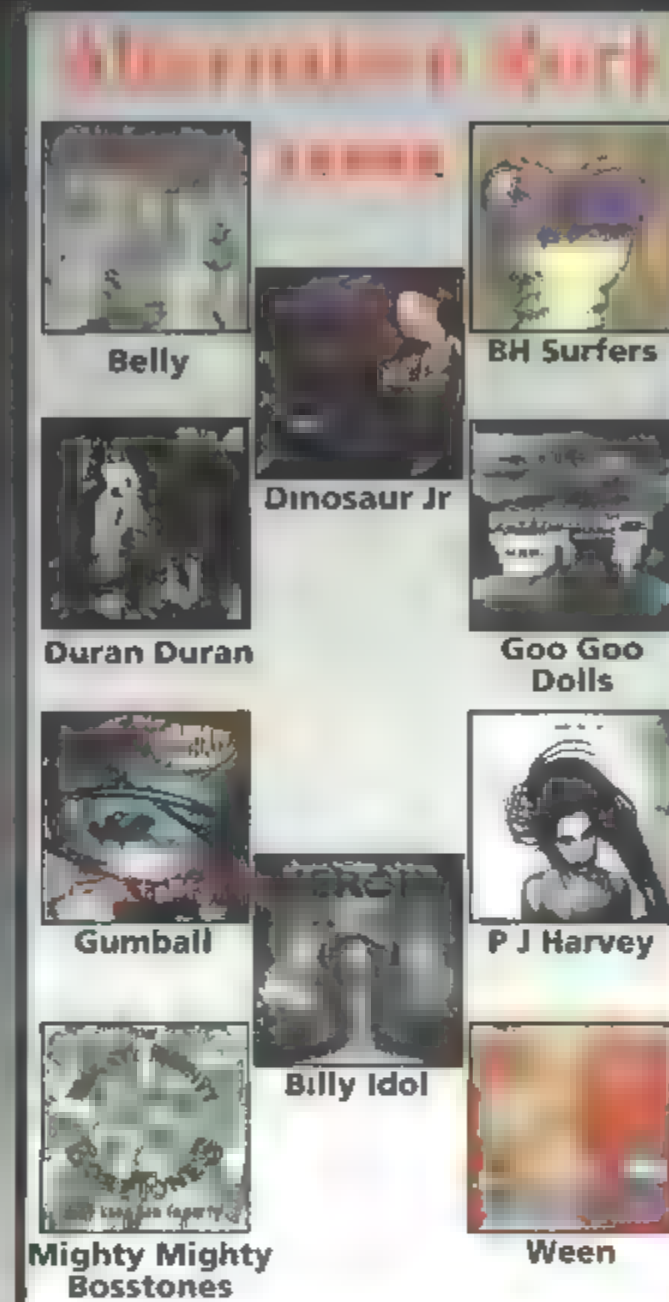
Mike Lupica writes for the New York Daily News and is a regular on ESPN's The Sports Reporters.

In his first season with the Mets, Bonilla blamed the media for making him look horrible. Right. I hit .249.

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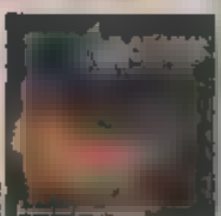
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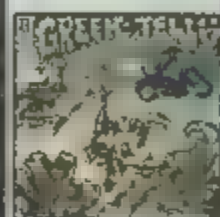
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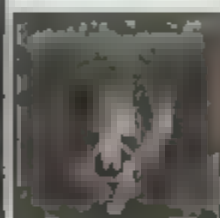
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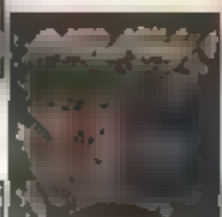
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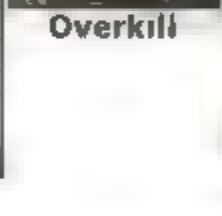
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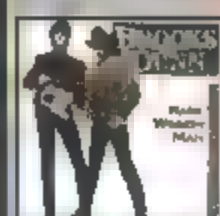
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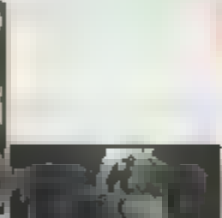
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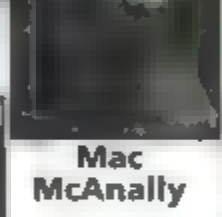
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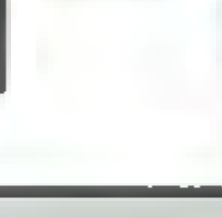
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: STANLEY BING

Big

AS LAST YEAR TURNED into this one, in the early part of the first quarter of the current annual installment of the tepid 1990s, I had a brief chat with this enormous consultant I know, a guy capable of taking a corporation apart from the inside out until the only person who is genuinely necessary to its operation is himself "Excellence is over," he said to me during the course of a rather painful conversation about our continued, ongoing, never-ending, terrifying reorganization that is doing the

business so much good "What's coming up behind excellence to take its place?" I asked "The basics," he said "Getting back to the basics. Sticking to the knitting." Of course, at first blush I thought this an incomparably stupid and simplistic idea, but I said to myself, Hey wait a second. That's what you thought about excellence and look how wrong you were. So I gave it some thought. At first I admit I was flummoxed. What were these so-heralded basics? I'm still young enough to remember only stuff that is definitely not the basics—trends, fads, notions you know, but nothing primal, ancient and effective. Or so I thought then.

But I was wrong. Yes, after a gnostic epiphany that hurt a lot I have found the most basic answer of all. And like all great, marketable answers, I didn't have to search for it at all. It was simply hanging there all the time.

It's all about Dick.

The solution—blinding in its simplicity and clarity—came to me on this year's mandatory life-threatening corporate retreat while I was standing on top of a prodigious slice of stone that jutted skyward on the lip of the Colorado Rockies. I was skiing. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Har de har "Bing on skis," said Weaver, our V.P. of finance, when he saw me waddling up my first hill, sideways. I didn't like his expression. Sure I looked like ten pounds of sausage stuffed into a five-pound nylon bag as I stood there on the great, gray mountain. But what was going on inside me was no comedy. As a person, I liked nothing better than to spend a day at my desk. Not once in an eight-hour period was I called upon to rise tall and straight, grow firm in my function and—Just Do It.

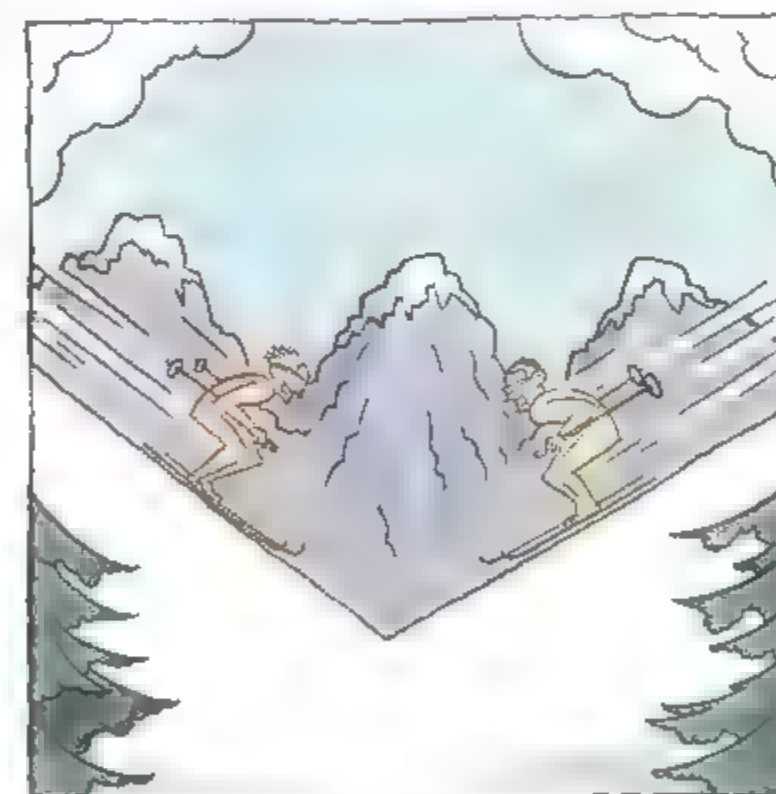
Then Stein required my presence at his retreat. To get there, I had to mount a really very tiny plane in Denver and

fly for more than one hour in that little tubular coffin at an altitude only perhaps three or four hundred feet above the tallest of the mountains that reared up beneath, stretching their fingertips to pluck us screaming and burning from the sky. I could read the headline: IMMENSELY PROMISING BUSINESS EXECUTIVE KILLED IN SENSELESS ACCIDENT WHILE TRAVELING TO PATIOLS CORPORATE FUNCTION. I was

afraid. Why was I doing this? Couldn't we have our conversation over iced decal cappuccino at the trattoria downstairs? No, we couldn't. And I'm glad we didn't. If we had, I would never have made my discovery. Now that I have everything's different. What was previously sentimental and yielding feels, I don't know, buttressed with a shaft of steel. I believe I have found something to take the place of excellence. I know it's going to be hard to trademark, but I'm gonna try.

It's Dick—the management philosophy. And the good news is, you can get some too. And once you've got it, you can learn to manage with it just like the big boys of the 1990s do. Just get into a few prehistoric attributes.

You're tough and outspoken: Not necessarily big or physically overwhelming, by the way. Look at our pal, Perot, and didn't he step up to the plate? And you don't have to enjoy a big Dick history either. At a large meeting the other day, Mountebank, a planning guy who formerly displayed all the dy-



Are you man
enough to
manage in the
1990s? Don't
worry. You're
equipped.

STEVEN GUARNACCIA

JULY 1993 ESQUIRE 49

namism of moistened zwieback suddenly rose from his chair and intoned, "We're going to deliver some goddamned growth in this goddamned business, or we're going to take a healthy look at it, goddammit." You'd better believe his change of style was subject number one at the tavern after the meeting.

You got what you want: Last week I was scheduled to move into the office down the hall, which was vacated not long ago by a former Dick around here whose name is unimportant Stein, who's headquartered in Akron and is in this building every week for only a day or so, decided that he liked the office I wanted better than the one he had been contemplating. So he went to Walt, expressed his desire, and took it. He didn't really care about my feelings, and you know what? I respect that. When I get to be as big a Dick as he is, I'd like to reserve the right to do the exact same thing! That's the ticket!

You slap leather when you have to: People love a showdown, especially when the right guy wins. Last February a division president I know let's call him Peter got a visit from his semi-Hitlerian chief executive officer, whom I'll call well, why not Dick. You can guess the agenda. Everybody meets at 8:00 A.M. for coffee and toast. Everybody works all day on the numbers. Everybody takes a little licking, keeps on taking, and, with luck, goes home at night with all limbs intact. So at 8:30 A.M. as the first 1993 forecasts hit the overhead projector, the CEO sits up, looks at Peter and his eighteen top guys, and says, "What the fuck is this?" "Beg pardon?" says Peter. "You're sandbagging the revenue number," says Dick. "I expect more than 2 percent growth from you guys, or I'm gonna know the reason why." There was a pause as Peter thought about whether he wanted to weasel in front of his key troops. "That's my number and I stand by it," he finally said. At which point both guys clammed up and stared at each other across the table without interruption from anyone for the next ten minutes. "It was amazing," says a financial type who was there. "They went eyeball to eyeball, and Peter never flinched. Finally Dick said, 'Let's move on,' and they did." About a month later Dick was sent hurtling from the top of the corporation, and my pal Peter got a nice promotion. Maybe that was a coincidence, but maybe not. People sure loved him for standing tall when he had to.

You keep coming back! And back! And back! Oh, there's Dick Nixon and Gordon Liddy and Olaf North filing in for Rash Limbaugh when the fat guy went on vacation recently. Kissinger and Carter being asked for comments thanks to the excellent job they did for the nation, Barry Diller rising to the top of the QVC network, and why, look, here comes Frank Lorenzo applying for the right to run an airline again! Half our former senior officers have popped up somewhere doing something for some body. They won't die. They won't go away. You can't count 'em out. You can't keep 'em down. Don't even try. They can't hear you. They don't have ears. All they have is desire.

You cost money and lots of it: In the week it laid off more than twelve thousand people, IBM also announced that it was going to pay its new CEO somewhat north of eight million big ones. Over at Ford, which lost a record \$4 billion in 1992, CFO Harold Poing took home more than four million bucks. Similar stories around. And while smaller folk might find this nauseating, Dicks in training stand up and cheer. There with the grace of God go, well, me for instance!

You express yourself and you're fun! Shucks, he'll get onto the E-mail with ya and chew the electronic fat, drink with ya at the corner bar when the day is done. In short, he's a regular guy. And he's got a bunch of cute eccentricities, too! One of our former chairmen played a fine jazz piano while pounding down bourbon. Another top dude I know raises lambs. Christ, I Edgar Hoover used to wear black-lace taffeta gowns like the ones my elderly Aunt Gussie used to get from Lord & Taylor. And he was one of the biggest Dicks of this or any other century. Who knows how many truly great men of this day and age are carrying on in that tradition?

You take it to the limit, push the envelope, and enjoy taking risks: So here I am, back on the top of that mountain, cringing in my boots. I had picked my way to the edge of what looked to me like a sheer cliff. I had my skis in a perfect wedge.

Like all great marketable answers, I didn't have to search for it. It was simply hanging there all the time.

Several four-year-olds screamed by me at 60 miles per hour, arms hanging loose from their shoulders in total relaxation. I felt like one knot of solid muscle creeping sideways like a crab. I was alone. I began to slide forward. Above my head, the ski lift whirled. "Yo, Bing! Way to go!" drifted down from one of the seats, which, by the way, had no safety bars on them. It was Leming and Forsch, who for some reason were almost dropping off the lift, so convulsed were they by unseemly laughter. Grim with the weight of my entire spasmoida history on my hunky back, I nudged myself forward several inches more. And began to move. "Yeah!" I heard from the nitwits hanging in the air. I was really motoring now. The hill yawned in front of me, an abyss, an invitation to flight. And then it came to me.

I had to just do it. That's what business demanded at that moment in time, and no matter what we all must do what business demands, no matter how foolish and self-destructive it might be. That's what makes it business.

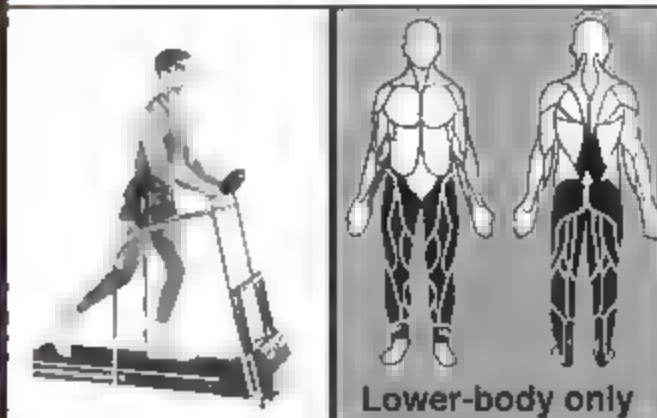
I was going fast now, really fast. I was passing people! Okay, a couple of old ladies, but they were people! The wind. The ice in my face! Faster and still faster I went and yet—I did not stop! No, I did not fall down, either, though doing so would have been easy and safe and even respectable. But I stayed up! Yes, I did! I stayed up and proud and tearless and ready for business.

I just did it, that's all. I'd do it again, if that's what's called for. Now if you'll excuse me, I've got to go. A couple of us are taking the afternoon off to plan some cutbacks and shoot some elephants. I'm a lousy shot, but they're pretty big, and I guess I'll hit a couple. The bottom line is, I'll just do it whether I'm any good at it or not. I'll just do whatever I have to. I've been big and I've been small, and big is better, definitely.

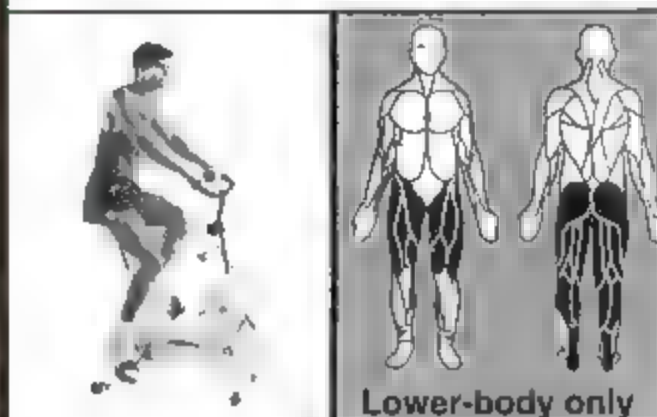
Sometimes I wonder, though. How long do you think we can keep it up?

Stanley Bing is the author of *Crazy Bosses* and is a contributing editor of this magazine.

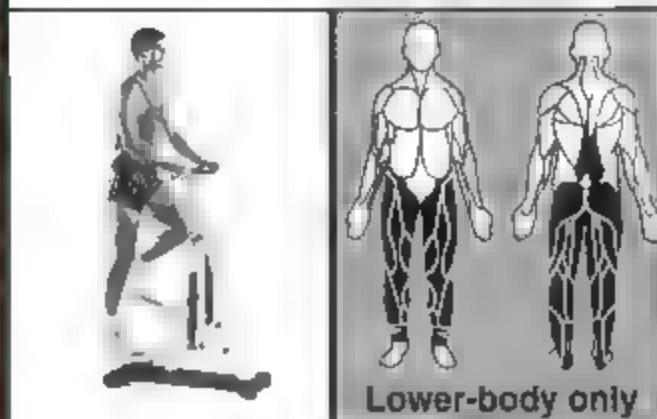
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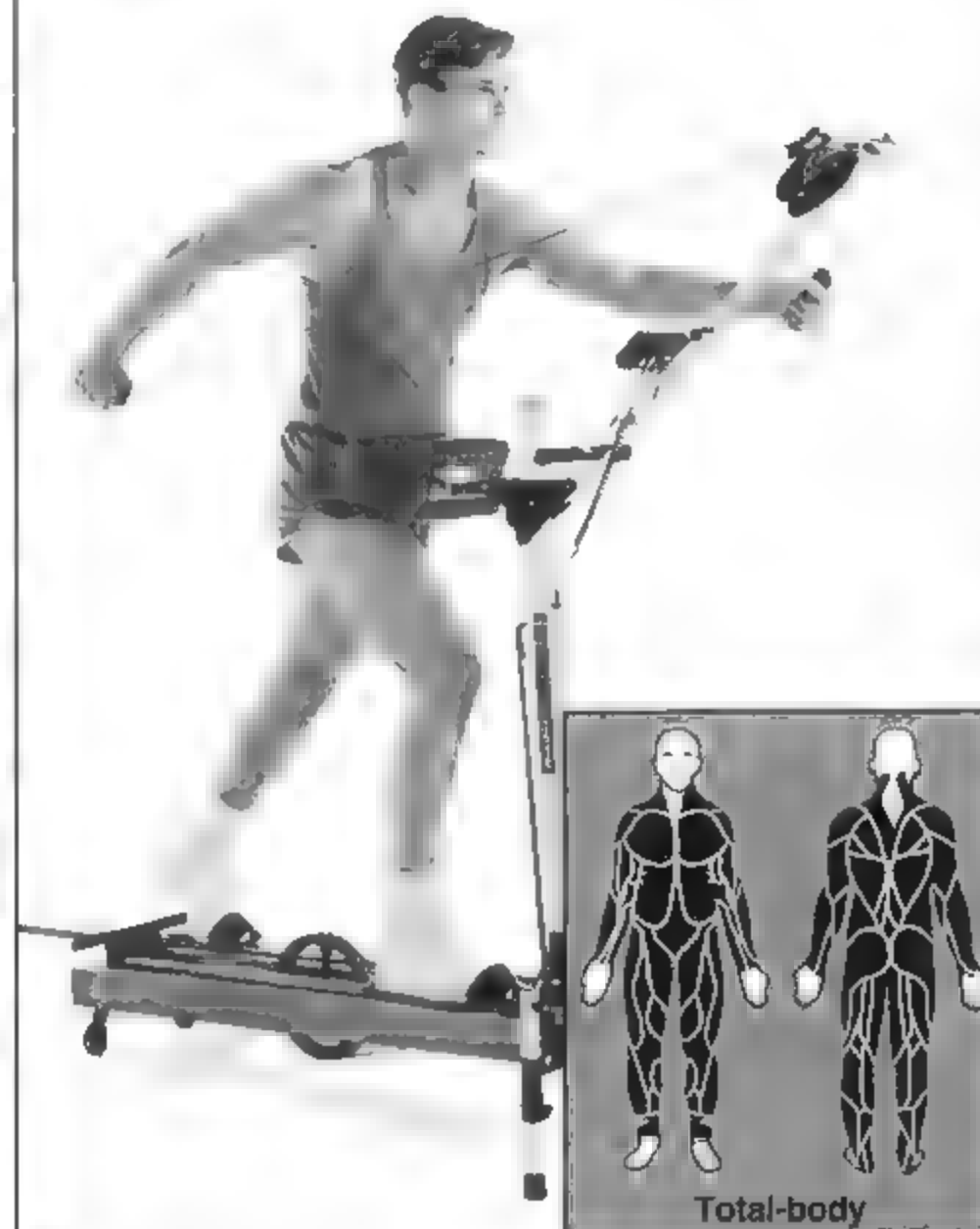


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THE LAST REVELATION FROM WACO

Everybody—David Koresh, the ATF, the FBI, and the media—wanted one final showdown at Rancho Apocalypse, and, by God, they got it. Notes on the end of the world. By Ivan Solotaroff

IN THE WAIST-HIGH UNDERBRUSH, the first hints of Armageddon are the animals. Jackrabbits, armadillos, polecats, field mice, and rats are darting past me on their way out of the thicket as I make my way in. The buzzards come minutes later heading in the same direction I am, their white wing tips barely visible above the pine trees as they fly against the strong southeast wind toward Mount Carmel. Deeper into the thicket, a hot gust brings the first black smoke and an odor of burning fuel so strong that it masks whatever other smells might be rising from the burning compound.

I'm not supposed to be here. But after fifty-one days of abiding the FBI's two-and-a-half-mile perimeter and absolute control of information, I'm not going to watch the endgame from the press center at "Satellite City," especially now that the FBI has breached the walls of the Davidian sanctum. I follow the tree line until I'm within three quarters of a mile of the conflagration at Mount Carmel and can taste the smoke with every gust.

Thus is as close as I get. Between me and all that's left of Rancho Apocalypse stands a row of thirty-five to forty agents of the Bureau

of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, bearing M-16s and special-issue 9-mm handguns. It seems wise to head back into the thicket, but before I go I pause and look over my shoulder, like Lot's wife, at one final image of church and state at war. Highlighted by the scrim of the inferno, an M-1 rank's American flag and Mount Carmel's blue-bordered Star of David flap furiously against each other.

The ground begins to shake with a terrible rumbling as a sleek, blue FBI chopper heads toward Mount Carmel. The chopper is halfway there when the Star of David finally snaps off its pole and sails into the fire. With the flag's disappearance goes seven weeks of waiting out a national obsession that turned on David Koresh's predilection for big guns, rock 'n' roll, and sex with underage girls. That is, if you can believe the media. I've been waiting for the other side of this story, limited thus far to one rambling local radio broadcast by Koresh, warnings of earthquakes and comets, a few banners hung from Mount Carmel's watchtower, late-night Morse code, a few holy fools, and the odd Libertarian.

The ground rumbles again as a Chinook, brought in to airlift casualties, clears the eastern edge of the thicket and circles Mount Carmel.

*Bearing the cross for Koresh
near Holy Hill, Waco, Texas*

Suddenly it's manifest how horribly the battle between two irreconcilable factions—those waiting for Judgment Day and a state that reserves judgment for itself—is being resolved in this combustion.

Directly above me, two Hueys clear the tree line, three armed agents riding shotgun on each. For weeks they've been buzzing the media at Satellite City, causing flashbacks among the Vietnam vets in the working press, forcing us all to now consider with new vehemence a simple question: Why are we in Waco?

WHEN THAT RUMBLING first sounded over State Highway 84, just after 9:30 Sunday morning seven weeks before, most people dressing for church just figured it was the Wings of Christ, the fraternal mission that trains local pilots for missionary work in Mexico. Joe Robert, an aircraft-support technician, was loading powder into shells for the Ruger .44 magnum he keeps with his nine other guns in a second fridge in his trailer off the highway. He looked out the kitchen window at the rotary cannon on the black Apache helicopter and knew better. So did Louise, who table-dances at a Waco club with a ring in her clitoris. The vibration of the two Sikorsky Black Hawks, leading the Apache in a southeast pass a mile down 84, made her son's rocking horse on the front lawn move as if some huge man were on it. Vernon, or David Koresh, or whatever he was calling himself now, hadn't been in to see her since the club near Mount Carmel closed because of dancers testing HIV-positive, but she knew the gunships were headed for the Branch Davidians. A lawman in her new club Saturday night had been swearing people to secrecy about a raid next morning, and he did it so well there wasn't anyone there who hadn't been sworn by the time the place closed.

George Baty was milking his cows when the two cattle trucks moved down Farm-to-Market Road 2401 toward Mount Carmel, led by a McClennan County deputy with his blue lights flashing. Behind it was a Ford Bronco and a wagon marked with a TV station's logo. J. D. Lempley, a sixty-five-year-old concrete contractor, was also suspicious when the three helicopters made their second pass over his mesquite woods off Old Mexia Road. He'd been hearing Koresh practicing with his 50-caliber in the pasture behind his and for months *boomp boomp boomp boomp* and that was just too much advertisement.

Inside Mount Carmel's thirteen buildings word had already gone out, and the Davidians were in camouflage when the ATF agents bolted out of the cattle trucks to announce their search and arrest warrants. It will probably never be known how the firing started—some say an accidental ATF shot triggered it, others that the report of an ATF multiple-fire concussion grenade was mistaken for automatic fire and returned as such. "Within five minutes," says Greg, a New Orleans ATF agent assigned to the southern buildings, "we'd fired our load and were pinned down. We had control while serving the warrants. After that, it was like lambs to the slaughter."

In the next five weeks, references to these warrants came as frequently and inchoately as Koresh's invocations of the Seven Seals. At daily press briefings, ATF spokesman Dan Conroy, looking as if he had stepped off a 1950s Jesuit campus, deflected all questions about the contradictions and

needlessness of the raid with seigneurial assurances that the warrants would clarify everything. Unseated two days after the fire, they conjured only the same unsubstantiated, ungrammatical preaching to the choir as Koresh's radio broadcast. The image they leave is sad, pathetic, actually two pariah groups, operating on the edge of the law, both hoping for salvation—the Davidians, to be "the first of the first harvest" at the end of time, the ATF vestigial revenueurs with no clear mandate, from an imminent House budget review. As with the FBI negotiations that would follow, the misunderstanding was wilful, a deliberate failure to communicate. When Sue Fatta, a Davidian caught outside Mount Carmel after the ATF raid, read about herself in the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* two weeks into the siege, it was the first newspaper she'd read in four years. When Bill Clinton drove by Mount Carmel last fall, on a campaign visit to the nearby TU electric plant, the Davidians armed themselves to the teeth, then wondered why the motorcade passed by without attacking. And when Koresh received word of the imminent ATF raid, there was no doubt in his mind who this enemy was: "The Assyrians," he told the Davidians, "are coming."

PARIAH LEADER OF A PARIAH SECT that had twice schismed off a pariah religion, Koresh never doubted he was a law unto himself. Regulations concerning firearms, marriage, and compulsory education were not his concern. "See those people?" he asked an Australian correspondent in 1991, pointing rather incredulously to Davidians repairing a roof at Mount Carmel. "They think I'm the son of God."

Like Christ's, much of Koresh's early years is lost to obscurity and wanderings. He was an aloof kid, preyed on and sodomized by older boys, and prone to excessive masturbation. His grandmother, Jean Holub, a Seventh-day Adventist, was his great solace. She took him to Saturday church services when he was six, and it had a huge impact. Sitting vigil in her 4x4 at the last checkpoint to Mount Carmel, she tells me how "Vern immediately felt such a peace in the church." He loved foreboding passages of scripture, which, she said, "he just kind of inhaled."

Dyslexic, he spent elementary school in the special-education room and dropped out of Garland High School, in the ninth grade, a detail that FBI special agent Bob Ricks made reference to at press briefings but which did not shame Koresh. "Nowhere is it written in the gospel," he taught, "that Christ ever attended these schools." He worked at gas stations and garages, then as a drywaller and landscaper, learned guitar, wrote songs, and haunted clubs in the Dallas area. In 1977 he moved from Garland to Tyler, an oppressive, God-fearing city of seventy thousand in east Texas, and he didn't do well there. Tyler is not a rock 'n' roll town, and the small congregation of the Seventh-day Adventist church, located in a warren of minor Baptist churches on the southern loop off the state highway, "disfellowshipped" Koresh two years later for fighting for power. He headed out to Los Angeles several times, trying to make it at clubs on the Strip and with Adventist congregations, but wound up back in Tyler each time. He got married and divorced on one trip, and later claimed to have become a Satan worshiper and heavy-metal fanatic on another. After the last trip he said he had had a mystical conversion in a Tyler graveyard.

In 1980 his mother became fascinated with the teachings of a sixty-one-year-old prophetess named Lois Roden, the

Few who knew him found Koresh's divine calling strange. "Saying God talks to you is not unusual," says a neighbor of the Davidians. "Down here, that's like saying the Avon lady called."

most recent leader of the Branch Davidians. Vernon drove up to Mount Carmel, the following spring for a Feast of New Moon service and luncheon and listened to Lois's sermon on the Holy Spirit, which she identified as feminine, perhaps herself. By 1982 he was her constant companion and chauffeur. By 1983 he was answering the phone in her bedroom at 2:00 A.M. and had assumed the role of prophet, a latter-day David heir to Mount Carmel's "Throne of David," and as the Lamb of God, scheduled to marry Lois, the Bride of Christ.

Instead, he married two underage Davidian girls and inaugurated a concubine system called the House of David, predicated on a complicated contextualization of passages from Psalms, Daniel, and Revelation. Sometimes it was a lot simpler. "Vernon," a seventeen-year-old Australian girl who spent time at Mount Carmel told her parents, "wants me to be his teddy bear tonight."

Such practices prompted a power struggle with Lois's forty-five-year-old son, George, who felt he was heir to the throne. After failing to sway the congregation that Koresh was in fact the Mahershalahazbaj Prophet, who "failed the grand test of the kings of Zion to not multiply wives," George brought rape charges against Koresh, naming his mother an "involuntary plaintiff," and brought the first guns to Mount Carmel: an Uzi semiautomatic and a .357 that couldn't shoot straight. He finally won legal title to the property, booted Koresh off and began preaching sermons that ended "In the name of George Roden, amen." Lois was conficted. "There are so many contenders for the Throne of David," she wrote. "Seems anyone can become a prophet these days."

In April 1984 Koresh was wandering again, now with a following of nine families. He bought twenty acres of wooded land near Palestine, Texas. There was one primitive building of pine logs, the families lived in abandoned school buses and shacks with no running water or electricity. After a year "in the wilderness" as he later called it, he took off for Australia, California, Hawaii, Israel, and England, where he found some two dozen West Indian converts.

Though he was anything but charismatic when he first wandered into Mount Carmel, by 1988, when he managed to wrest the property from George Roden, he seemed to have gotten the gift. "My tongue," he would tell the flock, quoting Scripture, "is a ready writer." He sinned and contradicted himself openly, but always with disparate chapter and verse citations to support himself. Interpreting these passages, he would stare the congregation down with a look of such



From top: Boy prophet, age fourteen; one of Koresh's biblical wives; George Roden, the last Davidian

threat and personal suffering that the dimples of his beatific smile a moment later seemed nothing less than absolution. His key word, borrowed from songwriting, was *harmonizing*. "No one," says Oliver Gvarlas, a twenty-one-year-old Australian who followed his father to Mount Carmel, "ever put such beautiful phrases together out of Scripture."

Koresh also had a remarkable ability to be known to people as they knew themselves. He professed a divine calling to a good many non-Davidians but to no one who would have found it strange. "Saying God talks to you is not unusual," says Joe Robert, whose son went to Axtell High School with Davidian kids. "Down here, that's like saying the Avon lady called." When an Australian TV reporter took Koresh to dinner at the Waco Hilton, a waiter overhearing the interview finally just had to break in. "Thank you, Vernon," he said. "Praise God, you saved my life."

To farmers and tradesmen in the Waco area, Koresh was precise, peaceable, and well-versed in the details of their trade. (One farmer told me, "If you're gonna write somethin' bad about David, I don't want to talk to you.") Koresh could talk Sheetrock, livestock maintenance, field rotation, and turbos with anyone and had, like Elvis, a dealership for Go-Karts and Jet Skis. "It can get dull out here," he explained. "People gotta have something to do." His special passion was for the intricacies, value, and history of high-performance Chevies, Trans Ams, Camaros, and '68 Vettes, which he'd over-haul for resale in California.

He drove a hard bargain but paid his bills promptly, in cash, kept his three tanks open to local fishermen and well-stocked with Florida bass and black crappie, and kept his grass cut. When a neighboring farmer's combine broke, Koresh sent forty Davidians to harvest a whole field of moldering hay, then invited the farmer to swim in his pool. When company came they were regaled with an hour of songs and everyone ate. "I spent a fine afternoon with them last summer," says Mike Barnard, who runs a race-car machine shop deep in the woods beyond the compound. "Sitting by the pool, eating burgers, and fighting the fire ants. He ordered takeout from Fuddrucker's. A hundred burgers and fries. He said I'd be amazed at the discount the fast food places'll give when you order in numbers like that." When he bought supplies—five hundred diapers at the Wal-Mart in Belmead, \$7,000 worth of groceries from the Sam's, three new engine blocks from Performance Automotive in Axtell, or bean and cheese nachos for a party [continued on page 116]

What We Think About When We Think About Models

By Philip Weiss

MODELS CONFUSE everything. In the 1990s we've been told it is definitely not okay to judge a woman solely by her looks, let alone take her out of school, put her on a starvation diet, refer to her only by her first name, paint her face, and tell her to keep her mouth closed while she stands there and looks pretty.

How then to explain that at a time when women are gaining access to (some of) the most powerful positions in society, the model's life is being held out as the height of glamour? Models are everywhere. They are trotted out at charity and corporate events as the star attractions. *The New York Times* lends the arrival of the "waif" model's great gravity. People mob their cars. They make huge sums of money and get to meet and sometimes marry very important people. Reporters call the modeling agency Elite in New York to find out what Cindy Crawford is reading, what toothpaste she uses, even how she arranges her closet. The rise of gangly, androgynous Kristen McMenamy is a news event. And Vendela signs ten thousand copies of her *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit cover.

Models seem to operate by different rules from other people, to lead the opalescent lives few women presume to lead anymore, overlooking a handful of princesses and socialites. Well-oiled machines, they move about hoisted with water bottles, which they drink from to keep their skin fresh and so they can put something in their mouths. Embracing their objecthood, they walk naked around sets, not caring who sees them.



Kate! Her look carries the weight of a political statement.

Movie stars used to be the site for popular fantasy. But their lives have grown too familiar, too localized. They speak out for abortion or confess that they were abused as children or discuss their partial nudity contracts in frank interviews. They aren't opaque.

Models are filling the gap. Still, their ascension is uncomfortable on too many levels. Feminism teaches that it is wrong to do this to young women. So does an ancient moral sense—vanity is a sin, after all, you can't devote so much energy to looking good without damaging your soul. Then, too, the faith one has in an American meritocracy quails when it comes to modeling. Everyone is supposed to be at the same starting line, right? And after that it's all dedication and hard work. But no, beauty provides more blunt evidence of life's unfairness than even wealth.

Modeling flies in the face of so many assumptions that inevitably the culture has come up with ways of dealing with its prominence. And so we tell stories. The models tell stories back. But the stories are all coded, euphemistic, forming the kind of mythology that once grew up around Hollywood back when Hollywood still glimmered and was far away.

Here are some of those stories.

MODELS ARE PEOPLE, TOO.

"THEY SHOW UP AT A CATTLE CALL, there are two hundred pretty girls," says Brett Ratner, a twenty-three-year-old part-

Vendela. She and other models are filling the celebrity gap left by actresses.



ner in Rush Model Management "Who can say who's the most beautiful? Come on. Ninety-nine percent of this is personality, the girl who can walk in there and say, 'I'm here, I'm getting this job.'"

Some variants of the personality rule are. It's all in the eyes ("Models have almost a wicked glint in their eyes, you know?" says Eileen Ford, and, "They're not horses." "They're not horses. It isn't the same thing as breaking in a horse. You have to be able to understand the human element," says Joey Grill of the Click agency.)

These assertions have their share of truth, but what they overlook, in fact what they mask and deny, is the degree to which aspiring models really are horses. Would-be models face an exacting and ruthless adolescent amniocentesis in which scouts who patrol shopping malls and (the big favorite) volleyball games closely inspect their skin, their hands, their facial structure, and their legs, and reject those who don't meet the mark.

Paul Rowland, of the hot agency Women, tells of the skin requirements: "The quality of a girl's skin at the age of fifteen is considerably different from what it is at the age of twenty. There's such a freshness to a girl who's fifteen."

A former scout who still works in fashion says that "legs should be well structured, toned, with good symmetry. Long is very good."

"Hands?"

"They should have good nails. Good nails means a nice nail bed. Not squat fingers. Long, tapered fingers."

"Breasts?"

"Legs are more important than breasts. In a photo shoot you can manipulate the breasts. And of course they need to have good shoulders, on the coat-hanger theory."

MODELS ARE MADE, NOT BORN.

AT THE MODELING ASSOCIATION of America International convention in April, hundreds of girls as young as thirteen converge on the Waldorf Astoria from small agencies all over America. The agencies they are seeking to impress are medium-high on the feeding chain of talent. What that means is that even if A-list girls like Kate Moss and Kati Tastet are breaking below the five-eight barrier, the agencies on hand tend to be slavish about enforcing standards.

"No one under five foot nine," one agent calls out periodically to thin the line at his table.

At another table, Cybele Pelcher, a model who is scouting for City Model Management, tells a tall Icelandic girl named Oddny to walk across the room for her.

"What am I going to tell this girl?" Pelcher mutters with a sigh. "She has too much chin. And I don't know whether she can carry off how short her legs are."

Bruno Bevilacqua di Santangelo, the president of Chic, an Italian agency, watches as girls he has called back after the previous night's "parade" line up at his table. He chats with them, asking if they would be willing to go to Italy—where girls build up their books with editorial work and how comfortable their parents are with their plans. Now and then he cups his right hand to his chest and, motioning at the same area of the girl's body, says, "A? B?" seeking to determine her breast size.

A friend wanders over and asks how he's done. Bruno shrugs. "One or two. One and a half. The second half I have to talk to my plastic surgeon."

Bruno is referring to a fifteen-year-old from Dallas, Vicki. Vicki has a broad nose. "If you think like this you don't no-

tice the nose—" He holds his finger strategically over a photograph of Vicki in Dalmatian-print pants. "It can be easy done. Because she has no other problems."

How will he break this news to the girl? Bruno shakes his head. It is the mother agency's responsibility, the agent back in Dallas.

MODELS ARE VICTIMS OF THE BEAUTY MYTH.

IN THE 1920S, Parsian Alice Prin modeled nude for Man Ray and other artists. She "dominated the era of Montparnasse more than Queen Victoria ever dominated the Victorian Era," Ernest Hemingway wrote when Prin was twenty-nine. Then Kiki, as she was known, went downhill, fast. It wasn't long before she was calling herself a *vieille putain* (old whore). A visitor to Paris described her unpiteously and with some measure of self-satisfaction: "She had grown thick," he wrote. "Kiki's face was almost destroyed by age."

The business still has scornful words for the model whose time is past. "She's worn," "She's tired," "She's over," they say. The judgment of a girl's flaws is ruthless. "Their skin starts looking different... if they're eating junk food," says makeup artist Vincent Longo, echoing a common refrain: "People picking at you all the time and scrutinizing you—that's hard," sighs Cindy Crawford. The result, says Eighties model Lynn Snowden, is that "models have such an obsession with minor flaws. The average receptionist has a higher self-image than the average model."

No wonder many people in the business get fuzzy about age. Even the youngest models hear the clock ticking. When I ask Paul Rowland, who represents Kate Moss, to tell her story, he says, "Kate was seventeen when she came to New York. She is eighteen now." A couple days later I see a photograph of Moss and Rowland at a party. They are celebrating her nineteenth birthday.

The modeling business exists in some measure to enforce the harsh terms of the model's bargain. When I mention to Joel Wilkenfeld, president of Next modeling agency, a recent article in which ex-models complained about eating disorders, he sits back at his banquette in the Russian Tea Room and—poodle-haired, a second-generation Garment District kind of guy who grew up on Fifth Avenue and Long Island—snorts.

"Why don't they give back the couple of million dollars they made, then," he says, "if it was so terrible—start some anorexic fund?"

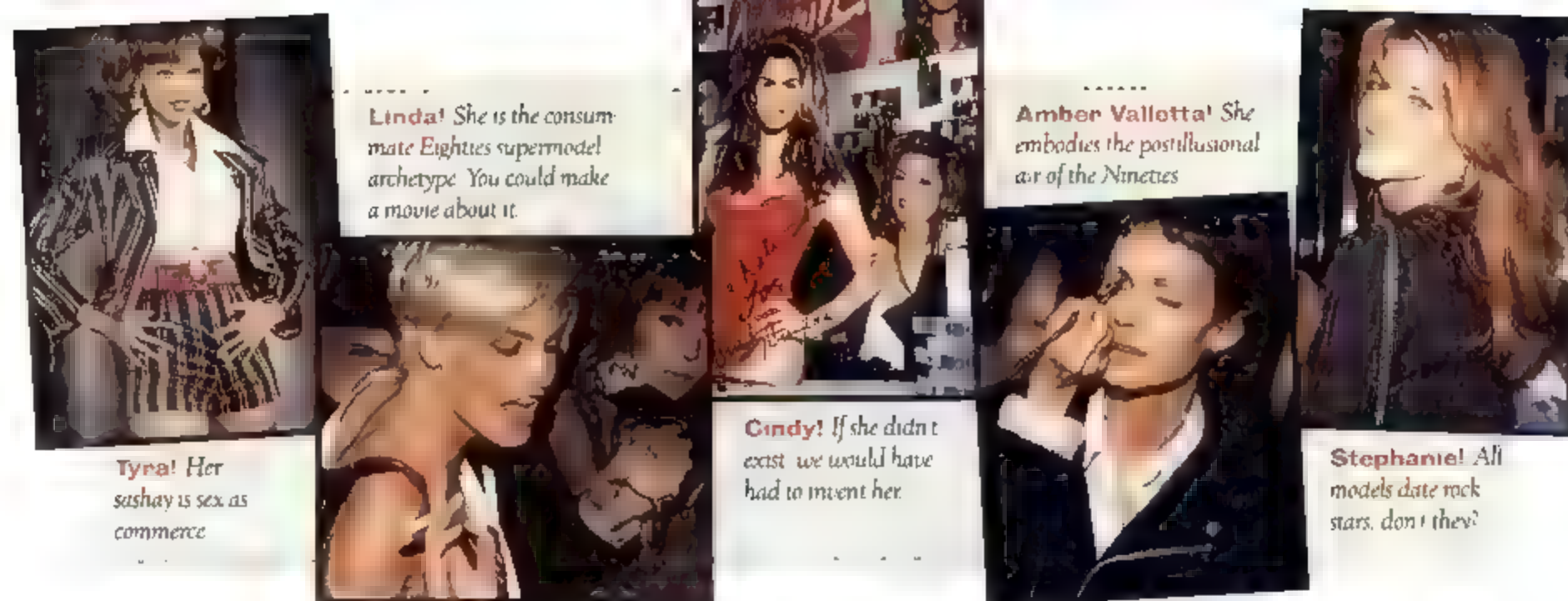
THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO TREAT A MODEL.

BRETT RATNER of Rush: "Never, ever, never compliment them. They're complimented constantly by losers. It's sick, but this is something that's an inside thing. If you mention something that's an imperfection about them—say, a mole, or their hair looks bleached—they're yours."

MODELING IS A CRUEL BUSINESS.

THE NEXT TIME I MEET Next's Joel Wilkenfeld, it's at Ahnelt, a new restaurant in SoHo that is trying to acquire a reputation as a model hangout. He tells a story about a new girl. As he does so he moves a colored cocktail straw in and out of the candle flame at the table, turning it into a blackened curl.

He was jogging around Washington Square Park when he saw a tall, stunning blonde who he knew was a model. He went up to her. Who do you work for? he asked. The model told him, and he said, Well, I should know about you and I don't. That means they're not doing enough for you. Do you



want to come to Next? The girl said she would consider it, and Wilkenfeld asked her to wait for him on the sidewalk. He kept running for twenty-five minutes.

"And she sat there?"

Wilkenfeld looks at me like I'm dumb. "I was watching her the whole time to see if she would walk away. But she didn't. That way I knew she was really unhappy."

People in the industry deal with its hurtfulness by adopting a biased machismo, much as Hollywood or Wall Street has its machismo. Sure it's a cruel business, they'll admit. Life is cruel. "The business uses you, so if you're smart you use it back," Cindy Crawford says breezily. Women's Paul Rowland is almost casual when he says that "some agencies pimp some girls out to playboys, older men, you know, just to make some money." Making these confessions so shamelessly confers a certain immunity. Once everyone knows it's a tough business, they seem to be saying, they can do anything at all.

MODELS ARE NOT REALLY BEAUTIFUL.

MODELS AREN'T GOOD LOOKING in real life, it's said. The "big girls," as top models are often called, have very small faces because small faces photograph better. People who have dressed them say that they're so skinny their bones stick out like knobs—you wouldn't want to sleep with them anyway. And if they're not "stick women" or "freaks of nature," then there's mean talk about Cindy Crawford's cellulite.

"We're selling fantasy here," Rowland says with an air of amusement. "We have a lot of boring people out there who just really get off on it."

In this rendering, modeling becomes a kind of vaudeville, greasepaint over pimples. The attitude is welcome, it gives us a place to stand above modeling and its pubac, unimplicated, as savvy as Madonna plotting her new look to conquer the stupid masses. The difficulty is that these statements tend to shrivel in beauty's sunlight. Seeing Niki Taylor in person ends this discussion in a blinding instant.

MODELS ARE DUMB.

MODELS ARE ACTUALLY QUITE SMART, thoughtful, articulate, and shrewd. Every magazine profile of a model says so. The writer often is bowled over by the model's perceptiveness and goes to great lengths to tell us how smart she is.

At the shows you cannot help but notice that the big girls do have mental gifts. Confidence, yes, but more than that, a great sense of awareness of what their look is, of who they are as expressed by their appearance. Christy Turlington is able to communicate a soulfulness, a deep melancholy

Naomi Campbell has an arrogant queenliness she is able to get across even when she turns and shows her radiant butt through transparent trousers. Saucy Tyra projects sex as commerce. The new waif models seem to understand the postlulational air of the Nineties in a way few of the rest of us can. Emma Ballfour has an edgy reluctance, a get-out-of-my-hair air of participating in an abusive ritual into which she has been dragooned. Amber Valletta, perhaps the star of the New York runway last spring, exudes a faintly disdainful serenity.

In short, there is a knowingness about all the best models, even the ones who give off an innocence. In the realm of appearance, they have figured things out. This is why photographer Patrick Demarchelier calls out the word *genius*! French for "inspired by genius," when he is particularly impressed during a photo shoot with Christy Turlington. And why *genius* is the semicamp rendition of that praise you hear everywhere. And probably why Andy Warhol reportedly said that beauty is a form of intelligence.

IN FACT, MODELS ARE QUITE SMART.

"THE DISCUSSIONS ARE INANE," model/actress Brit Hammer says about life on a studio set. "They're like being constantly tuned to the E Channel."

The industry seems to seek a certain blankness in its recruits. They are pulled out of high school at more or less fifteen in the hopes that their careers will take off, if they are going to take off, by seventeen or eighteen and last at least five years. If they got them any older, agencies say, it wouldn't be worth the investment. The girls' parents inevitably require that they graduate from high school, and they do, but then what?

Glenis Frank, a Ford model who's in college, says that while many models vow to get a college degree, few do. By the time they wash up on the end of their careers, at twenty-five or so, they have too high an opinion of their status to accept grinding it out with mortals much younger than they. "Very few models have made the transition to life after modeling successfully," says former top model Dayle Hadden.

Habits of mind are not encouraged because they go against both the financial and aesthetic demands of the models' handlers. When she complained about Italian agencies that skimmed 50 percent of her earnings, Lynn Snowden says, she was told that she asked too many questions. Elite's John Casablancas told *New York* magazine that when girls get older they start to think for themselves too much. Brit Hammer says she was often told to "manufacture a smile."

It may well be that beauty is a form of intelligence, but the business requires that all of a model's intelligence be fo-

THE TEN BASIC MODEL POSES AND WHAT THEY MEAN: A Guide for the Amateur Fashion-Mag Semiotician

Wet!

"Nothing better than rolling around in the Caribbean surf in a \$5,000 beaded silk dress. The best part is, you're not here."



Multicultural!

"I wouldn't let these kids shine my Robert Clergerie pumps. Hey, the cute Nicaraguan boys doing a nice spit-and-polish right now!"



Ugly!

"I'm a serious model. But what I really want to do is act."



Lifestyle!

"Why won't any of these guys look at me?"



Realistic!

"When I think of today's woman, I think of power, style, confidence, and of course, walking seminaked through a hotel lobby."



Fetish objects!

"Under the clothing, we are all animal, no? The stunted horse belongs to the fat, sweaty guy from the ASPCA."



Legs up!

"Why not? I love the feeling of blood rushing to my head."



Down with the blue-collar crowd!

"I'm not inhaling until this photo shoot is over."



Power!

"You know, working in an office is kinda fun."



Homoerotic!

"Sometimes when we touch, the honesty's too much."





cused in the most superficial area. "Once I cut my hair—I cried for two months," says model Tatjana Patitz. "I thought I was an idiot. People said, 'We can't believe she cut her hair!'"

MODELS HAVE IT ALL.

EARLIER THIS YEAR Leilani Bishop, a young Hawaiian-born model whose good girl/bad girl look has been everywhere in magazines, left the agency Next for Paul Rowland's agency, Women, amid some bitterness. "It's very easy to sway a model, you know," her former handler Joel Wilkenfeld says. "Paul was taking advantage of a seventeen-year-old." Why did she go? Wilkenfeld says it was because he declined to advance her \$6,500. Not a lot of money when you're talking about a girl who might end up making \$15,000 a day if she's handled right.

The relatively paltry sum shows that for all the extravagance and exaggeration, the business is as tight as any other. Industry estimates suggest that maybe a dozen girls earn more than \$1 million a year, and that another fifty make more than \$500,000. "You see beautiful models working in bars," says Glenis Frank, explaining the strategy of underworking a model to increase her allure. "These are the ones that the agents are grooming to become supermodels." And photo sessions for magazines can pay as little as \$24 an hour.

The stars also eclipse the average full-time model, the girl who can make between \$40,000 and \$250,000 a year for work that doesn't get a lot of attention. A couple thousand girls may fall into this category. "Most of my money I make at \$150 to \$175 an hour," says Frank, who serves as a size eight fit model for designers. "A good week for me is \$3,000." One fit model is said to make more than \$400,000 a year.

The money's good, but such choices represent a risk for a young model. Getting known as a fitter or "catalogue queen" means that a girl loses her chance to surprise the people who are looking for new faces for the handful of much-coveted multimillion-dollar endorsement contracts. "A girl can be ruined within a matter of a month," says Nicole Bordeaux, a West Coast agent who says she regularly turns down \$40,000 jobs for her models.

One of the other temptations a young model faces (and one Cindy Crawford and Stephanie Seymour said yes to) is whether to do lingerie. Lingerie pays perhaps \$350 an hour, as against \$250 for the standard commercial rate. That difference is one reason models say they get breast implants.

There are other risks. Many models go to Japan, where a girl might make a guaranteed \$30,000 in a month but from an industry standpoint disappear off the face of the earth. Far

better to go to Italy, where there are many fashion magazines whose production values are quite high. There she can begin to get attention—and meet tons of unsavory men, too.

For all a model's earning potential, there are still sharp limits on her freedom. A young model tends to be under someone's thumb almost all the time. Her safe handlers include the small-town agency or school that has discovered her—almost always headed by a dowdy, motherly woman who calls out "Click, click, click" as her charges go through a repertoire of thirty memorized poses—and the gay men who, as she rises, will spend so much time toying with her body.

The safe types often have to keep the unsafe ones at bay but sometimes have to do business with the sleazebags to find new talent. Says longtime agent Jeremy Foster-Fell, "If Charlie Manson had brought me Claudia Schiffer, I would have dealt with Charlie Manson."

Last year, when James Rowan, co-owner of Spectrum Model Management, was sued in a financial dispute, several models gave affidavits saying that Rowan had come by or called the models' apartment at inappropriate times. Nicole Beach, a nineteen-year-old from Spokane, said Rowan "asked me why I would refuse to sleep with him when he claimed that there were many other girls who had slept in his bed." A Swedish model said, "I got the feeling he thought he owned us and we lived in his apartment." Rowan calls the charges "bald-faced lies. I've never sexually harassed a girl in my life."

There are other ways models can feel owned. A big part of the agent's job, for instance, is telling a model that he can no longer represent her and that she may be finished. For some this moment comes at age eighteen, when the agent figures the big break won't happen for the lucky ones; it comes at twenty-six or twenty-seven.

"I just did ten today," Wilkenfeld says, sounding like the hired hand killing rabbits in a social-realist drama.

There were some tears. How does he handle that?

Wilkenfeld shrugs. "It doesn't bother me."

MODELS SCREW UP EVERYTHING.

EILEEN FORD COMES OUT of her office after an interview and a beautiful woman is hovering by the Xerox machine. Almost in spite of the haut suburban air created by the weathered barn-wood paneling at Ford's, the woman has a wild look. Her long legs are encased in black tights and she has a frowny, bad hair day flush. She pushes herself at Ford and blurts, "Eileen, can you advance me \$8,000?"

Ford doesn't flinch. "No," she says.

The woman's face falls and she flees into another room.

"Who's that?" I ask.

"That is a girl who should be rich," Ford says crossly.

This is one of the stories people like to tell about models that they spend money like water. It is one of the themes of the recently published *Thing of Beauty: The Tragedy of Supermodel Gia*. It is a refrain of discussions with models, all the girls who washed up broke. Christy Turlington tells the story of Dovima working in a pizza parlor. Model Amber Smith talks about bad choices—\$1,500 on a Shar Pei she gave to a friend.

"Almost every model ends up with no money," says Lynn Snowden. "They're teenagers. They've never had an other job. The relationship with the agency is exactly the same as the relationship between prostitute and pimp."

In popular expressions of the belief that models can't handle their success, they always suffer. They marry loser boyfriends because they need propping up. They marry sharpies who take them for all they're worth. They blow it all on cocaine and fall asleep in the makeup artist's hands. The spectacularly beautiful Gia gets strung out on heroin and comes to nothing in a Philadelphia hospital, her looks shot, her body ravaged by AIDS. That story feels as traditional as the Brothers Grimm—it's got a misogynist edge.

SOME DON'T.

THE REBUTAL TO THESE STORIES IS Cindy Crawford.

Cindy was born out of the body of Gia. When she first came along, discovered by the Chicago photographer Skrebneski at the late age of nineteen, she was known as Baby Gia. Her molten dark looks were so reminiscent of the Italian-American beauty. But Crawford seems to be entirely clean about her looks. She made big money, she got a cool husband, and now when that beauty is fading, by the modeling business's standards, she can move smoothly into the next phase. If Cindy didn't exist, we would have had to invent her.

"Believe me—Christy Turlington and Linda Evangelista, when we're finished, we're all going to have money," Crawford says. "It's not like the old days when they blew it all on coke or something. We're businesses now. It used to be that if you came two hours late you might be the first one there. Now there's just too much money in it."

Cindy makes us feel good because she isn't too vain, she never got too caught up in her beauty. "Hey," she says, "I've worked in a cornfield. We're just midwestern girls who by some grace of God were gifted with a nice envelope."

SOME MODELS KNOW HOW TO MAKE LOVE TO THE CAMERA.

EVERYONE SAYS THAT they can't ever know about a girl till they see the photographs. And yes, watching Christy Turlington work with Patrick Demarchelier over a two-day period is like observing a sort of black magic. Turlington seems to give something of herself, yield something, in those moments I can feel, it just standing around, when she hangs her eyes on me just to hang them on something and for an instant makes me feel that she's mine.

But the myth about being photogenic is also a description of power. Photographers, most of them men, act as gatekeepers to the industry. For all that women editors determine who will be featured in magazines, they turn to images produced by, or girls discovered by, male photographers. (To be sure, there is a growing group of hip women photographers, including Ellen Von Unwerth, who brought us Claudia Schiffer, and Corinne Day, who made Kate Moss.) A model

simply cannot get attention without a good photographer. Or, for that matter, a bad photographer. One scout says that young models' portfolios have to be cleansed of such test shots as those in which a photographer has posed them in scanty clothing holding a gushing hose or a gun. The modeling-industry jargon's balmy overtones echo this power equation. To launch a model to prestige level is called "making a girl." And breasts are almost offhandedly called tits.

IT'S EASY TO TALK A MODEL OUT OF HER CLOTHES.

ALL MODELS SEEM TO HAVE stories about being taken advantage of when they were young. Cindy Crawford says she was pressured into taking off her clothes. Amber Smith was duped into swimming in what she later learned was hammerhead-snark infested water. She agreed to sit for nudes, thinking they would help get important photographers on her side. The photos are now coming back to haunt her.

One model describes the method. "A photographer—a very good photographer—knows girls want pictures from him. A girl comes down to show her book. She wants it very bad. She's an unknown. She's quaking, she's sweating. He can abuse that situation really easily. This photographer, he says, 'Well, if you want to do pictures with me, you have to be nude.' He's watching the quandary on her face. That's what he likes to watch, the struggle of her decision. 'It's the only way I'll do it.' Usually they do it because they need the picture. He's not going to take sleazy pictures. But it's almost like wanting a virgin."

YOU COULD MAKE A MOVIE ABOUT IT.

SOONER OR LATER a movie will be made that crystallizes all the mythologies, all the dirty secrets, much as *Sunset Boulevard* gave life to our darkest feelings about Hollywood even while reaffirming its power. The main character of this movie will be a supermodel, someone like Linda Evangelista, a girl whose career seems to be suffering a fiery death, a girl with a feral, angular beauty and a nasty reputation. She would be married to a rock star who's so paranoid that he's hired a bodyguard to watch her. A bodyguard she's sleeping with. This is a girl we can hate and love.

It'll begin the way so many fashion shoots begin, with people waiting around for the model to show, even though they gave her a fake time to try to con her into coming early. When she finally arrives, she will carry on an old fight with the makeup guy. In a sign of contempt, she will wash his work right off her face. She will tell the photographer that her husband wants back all the nudes the photographer made of her. The client's a sleaze, too. That night he'll come on to her over dinner. If she'll go to bed with him, he'll give her a big contract and save her career. The client ends up dead.

Now the model will really have to bargain with fate. She'll be forced to involve the makeup artist in the cover-up because she broke a nail committing the murder. And he'll go along only if he gets to make her over, cutting her hair, tweezing her eyebrows, giving her a whole new look.

Some people say that if you tweeze eyebrows they don't come back. They may never grow back. Imagine the girl looking in the mirror—after her career's taken off again, of course—and rubbing them, a modern-day Lady Macbeth. That's rich. You could work with that. In fact, you get to finish this story any way you want.

But just one thing. The girl never, ever gets to be a woman. ■

NO, MISTER PRESIDENT, I'M BRIT, HE'S WOLF

It's not that Bill Clinton hates reporters; he'd just rather, say, get filibustered by Bob Dole, backstabbed by Sam Nunn, and pummeled by Ross Perot than spend another minute chatting with the press.

BY WALTER SHAPIRO

THE MOOD ON THE PRESS BUS back to the New Orleans Naval Air Station was surly. We had missed the presidential motorcade, which meant that the flower of the White House press corps had to endure New Orleans rush hour traffic like ordinary civilians. So there we are creeping past downtown New Orleans in the left lane of an elevated expressway when Susan Spencer of CBS looks out the window and discovers—to everyone's horror—there is no guardrail. If

the bus veers eighteen inches to the left, it's splat—a forty-foot drop to the pavement. Our skittishness has its roots in the ability of all reporters to mentally compose a presidential plane crash story and the sobering awareness that our names if mentioned at all would be at the bottom of the page in an aside beginning “Also aboard.”

To relieve the tension on the impeded bus, somebody wondered aloud whether money to pay for the missing guardrails had been included in Clinton's failed Economic Stimulus Package. Ruth Marcus of *The Washington Post* dictated the following mock lead: “New Orleans: The entire White

House press corps perished yesterday when their bus careened off a highway without a guardrail. The White House blamed the tragedy on the failure of the Republicans in the Senate to pass the President's economic program.” A radio reporter who had covered the Bush White House added this straight-from-the-heart kicker: “President Clinton would have expressed sympathy for the victims, but he didn't know their names.”

The President doesn't even know our names. Could there be a sadder lament in American journalism? Reporters scheme, connive, and backstab to win the White

House beat, reveling in its prestige, perks, and prime time seat on the periphery of power. So what if the White House pressroom is claustrophobic, dark, and faintly redolent of used kitty litter? So what if the job is groveling for callbacks and table scraps? What makes it all worthwhile is the puffed-up self-importance that comes with a personal connection to the most powerful man in the world. Princes of journalism—that's how many in the White House press corps secretly viewed themselves, until Bill Clinton arrived to usher in the new media Ice Age.



A NEAR-LYNCHING CAN LEAVE LIFELONG ROPE BURNS. CLINTON CANNOT FORGET THAT HIS "FRIENDS" IN THE MEDIA HELPED PUT A NOOSE AROUND HIS NECK OVER GENNIFER FLOWERS.

DEMOCRATS HAVE a natural cultural affinity for reporters, so it comes as a shock that as far as the press is concerned, Clinton is the most distant president since Richard Nixon. Most White House regulars believe that Clinton could not pick them out of a police lineup. Before the President's second press conference, the rumor circulated that Clinton could not recognize Terry Hunt of the Associated Press, whose turn it was to pose the opening question. "In a piece that Peggy Noonan wrote for *Newsweek* during the Republican convention," Hunt says, "she predicted that Clinton as president would be calling up favored reporters at 2 on A.M. to ask, 'What should I do about Bosnia?' Somehow, I haven't gotten one of those phone calls."

Neither, apparently, has anyone else—not Gwen Ifill at *The New York Times*, not network correspondent Andrea Mitchell, not heavy-hitting Washington bureau chief Al Hunt of *The Wall Street Journal*, not even sympathetic columnists Joe Klein and Mary McGarry Morris. Clinton is playing Jack Kennedy without a Ben Bradlee in sight. He offers the press true equality—everyone is consigned to Siberia. During his first one hundred days, Clinton appeared just once in the White House pressroom, held no known off-the-record chats with White House regulars, and sat for only a handful of print interviews. As for mano-a-mano games of horseshoes and private tours of the family quarters, such diversions are as likely as the Queen inviting the Fleet Street gossips in for a night of snooker.

In this environment, small indignities take on enormous significance. On a recent Sunday evening, Clinton landed at Andrews Air Force Base after an out-of-town speech and impulsively decided to eat dinner aboard *Air Force One* rather than curb his appetite until he returned to the White House. Clinton's reasoning probably went like this: "I'm President of the United States, and maybe I can't save Bosnia—but at least I can have dinner when I damn well choose." But to the press pool, forced by the Secret Service to stand on the tarmac for forty minutes until Clinton

finally left the plane—there was a competing principle at stake. "This was just rude," snapped a pool photographer. "Bush would have never done this to us."

Sure, it all sounds petty, but it helps explain why pressroom veterans from the Bush years sound almost as nostalgic for the good old days as White Russians in Paris during the 1920s. There is no Clinton equivalent to Kennebunkport—a place where the press could hang out



with the staff and sometimes even the President. George Bush, a man of limited charms for those outside the private-banking set, lavished all his personal magnetism on the press. Bill Clinton, who will touch, hug, and listen patiently as some stranger in McDonald's spills out his life story, is eager to charm anyone in the world—except the correspondents who now cover him.

The President was unavailable to explain why he had so frozen out the press. But lunch with Dee Dee Myers, the effervescent girl-just-want-to-have-fun press secretary—yielded this clever rationale: "In the final analysis, the President believes that the press will do its job regardless of whether they support your agenda or whether they like you personally. George Bush believed personal rela-

tionships with the press would protect him when things got tough. He was wrong." Not entirely true—there was a reason that leading Democrats dared not run against Bush in 1992—but I heard the Myers analogy often enough to believe that the Clinton team has internalized it.

White House reporters are embarrassed to reveal to the world (and perhaps their editors) that Bill Clinton exists in a private universe they are unable to penetrate. This burden is acute for the network correspondents, since every time they do a stand-up on the White House lawn, the subliminal message is that they are privy to everything that goes on inside. It was comic to watch all four during a rare joint TV appearance on *Larry King Live* dance around the issue of their own lack of access. You had to listen closely for telltale bursts of honesty.

Wolf Blitzer (CNN): "Maybe it's just, you know, my newness covering the President of the United States, but I've had very little, if any, personal..."

Andrea Mitchell (NBC): "The Bill Clinton we used to see before the New Hampshire primary was a very different Bill Clinton."

Brit Hume (ABC): "I don't think he's close to anybody."

Larry King: "Do you feel close to him?"

Susan Spencer (CBS): "Not particularly."

A NEAR-LYNCHING can leave lifelong rope burns, so, of course, Clinton cannot forget that his "friends" in the media helped put a noose around his neck over Gennifer Flowers and his draft record. Beyond New Hampshire, other stories during the campaign wounded Clinton's ego—particularly the pieces about his Arkansas record that seemed to portray him as just another quasi-corrupt cracker politician. The result is a President so thin-skinned that he even snapped at the ever-innocuous Bryant Gumbel. "Since when are you worried about being fair?" Contributing to the President's don't-let-them-get-too-close wariness is his antipathy to waging policy debates in the press. The shortage of schmooze also stems from time demands. "If it's a scheduling decision between two inter-

views or a meeting on enterprise zones, it's no choice," says a White House communications aide. "Clinton will always pick the policy meeting, even if the interviews would get him closer to his goal of passing the legislation."

Now for the big question: How much difference does any of this make in the tone of the Clinton coverage? Younger reporters like Ruth Marcus argue with sincerity, "I don't want to be the President's friend, I just want to cover him." But in an era when correspondents are given wide latitude for interpretation, never underestimate the psychological factors that influence coverage. News analysis is astonishingly subjective—a function of mood, attitudes of opinion, and, yes, how well one's best lines went over at last night's dinner party. That's why I cynically assumed that the Clinton team had to be keeping score on how individual reporters treated them, but as I went from office to office in the White House, offering off-the-record anonymity for a little candor, I got nothing. Three hypotheses: (1) this is the most even-tempered administration in history, (2) they don't read or watch TV, or (3) they are lying. All this brings to mind a recent chat with a high-ranking White House official (these monikers become unavoidably Delphian), and this was not communications director George Stephanopoulos: "Our story is a little hazy in the media," he said. "But the coverage has been fair." Really? Well, a honeymoon would have been nice, he conceded. As for the future, he predicted more presidential press conferences, but don't expect Brit Hume to be coming up for cocktails.

A few in the administration grasp what is at stake. "The rise of the press as celebrities tracks exactly with the Reagan-Bush years," theorized a Clinton communications aide over lunch at the Hay-Adams. "And there was no greater plane from which to be a star than covering the White House. By the mid-1980s, Sam Donaldson was as well known as Ronald Reagan. Then in walks a new president who doesn't want to play that game. No wonder they're mad." Even for print reporters, covering the White House might well mean an occasional seat on the Brinkley show, a lucrative book contract, and perhaps \$5,000 for a speech to the National

Federation of Fig Fanciers. But all of these are transactions, and you have to give in order to get. The coin of the realm is the appearance of access, and what counts are phrases like "when I was up in the family quarters" or anecdotes that begin "To understand Bill Clinton, you have to watch him when he's losing at hearts." Not even the most fervent fig fancier wants to hear a speech that begins "To understand Bill Clinton, you have to watch him on a podium from five hundred feet away."

The President's through-a-glass-darkly vision of the media sets a tone that radiates throughout the administration, beginning with Stephanopoulos. How can I personally complain about George when he ushers me into his large West Wing office by instructing his assistant, "Tel. Brokaw. I'll call him back." Seated sidesaddle in a wing chair, his legs dangling over the wooden arm, George is now willing to concede that his initial press briefings had been "pretty bad." He winced when I reminded him that at the height of the Zoe Bard controversy he uttered the unfortunate "Mistakes were made"—the same passive voice construction that Bush had used to wiggle away from the Iran-contra affair. Stephanopoulos recalled, "I think that was my first time in the pressroom."

By the time you read this, Stephanopoulos may have been elevated beyond the daily briefing or dead. Odd, because he has just begun to master the art of saying nothing with brio. Asked what the President would do to mark his hundredth day in office, George suggested "a public reading" of that campaign classic *Putting People First*. Then there was the briefing when Tom Friedman of *The New York Times* asked a multipart question on Bosnia so combative that another reporter shouted at him derisively, "Thank you, Mr. Secretary." At the podium, George didn't miss a beat: "You heard about the staff shake-up?"

But neither Stephanopoulos nor anyone else in the White House seems to know how to spin a colorful behind-

the-scenes yarn that makes the President look good. Partly because even George is not privy to all the workings of the administration's covert core. Bill Hillary, Al Gore, Mack McLarty, and presidential best friend Bruce Lindsey. What the President doesn't understand is that anecdotes are important because they form the symbolic underpinnings of a successful presidency. Remember Ronald Reagan telling Nancy after he was shot by John Hinckley, "Honey, I forgot to duck"? That tale helped forge the political image of the Gipper's grit and greatness.

By walling himself off from the press—and by way of them, the public—the President is depriving all Americans of a way to grow comfortable with him in the Oval Office. Bill Clinton has already become too set in his no-press-please. I'm-President habits to establish a graceful rapport now. Sitting in the pressroom, I can imagine what Clinton sees when he looks out at this dog-eared pack hurling questions during a photo op or preening for their thirty seconds before the TV cameras at an East Room news conference. But a president has the power to shape the behavior of the



press corps so that it conforms to his own worst fears: remember Nixon's paranoia. If Clinton views the media as malcontents marring his message, that's what they will become. A successful president must have the self-confidence to accept the White House press corps as it is: herd mentality

and short attention spans notwithstanding. Clinton should recognize that there's nothing wrong with letting reporters witness his unguarded moments (they might even learn something watching him lose at hearts). In fact, such access is the President's only hope to avoid becoming a caricature. So, don't stop thinking about tomorrow's headlines. It is, as they say in the therapy game, never too late to change. New Hampshire is long past, and four years is a long time to carry a grudge. ■

Walter Shapiro, Esquire's White House correspondent, writes regularly in this space.



Never met the man, but we certainly wish him all the success and happiness doing this show that we've had all these years. The only thing I do know about Conan O'Brien: I heard he killed a guy.
—David Letterman, *Late Night*

Conan O'Brien: Everyone who's in comedy who's from a big family says, "I got my training at the dinner table." And it's true, that's where I started doing a lot of this stuff. It's just such a cliché that I'm loath to say it. But in my family there was wit—not wit, but foolishness. I think there was wit around the Kennedy table. But there wasn't wit around our table. There was just foolishness.

Thomas O'Brien: Conan's father. At some point in grade school, he developed the idea that his career would be as a professional teaser. He'd go from door-to-door with his kit and his apparatus teasing small children, which he happened to be very good at. But the straight-faced premise was that somehow this would be a career, that people would pay him for this. Which is absurd, and he was aware of that—that he was going to rise in his profession as a door-to-door, itinerant teaser.

Ruth O'Brien: Conan's mother. That's what the kids in the family called him: Tease Man. And that's what he called himself.

Justin O'Brien: Conan's brother. When I was a lot younger, we'd play cops and robbers, and he'd try things out on me like instead of just the usual good guy/bad guy, he'd bring in the judicial system. Instead of just being the policeman who caught the bad guy, it would be the policeman who got the bad guy but the bad guy got free on a technicality, and then I'd have to show up for a hearing. And for a ten-year-old kid, this all gets a little strange. The whole appellate process was involved. And he'd play a lot of roles. He'd be my attorney and he'd be the judge and he'd be my cell mate.

Conan O'Brien: I was in love with Thirties and Forties movies, and so was my friend Jake Fleischer, and we used to watch them all the time. In the fifth grade we wrote this musical that had that kind of language in it, like, "Hey, buddy, what's the story?" "I'll tell you, pal." It was called *The Entertainers* and it was about two guys who hook up and they become entertainers and they want to go all the way to the top.

Jeff Young: Conan's high school English teacher. He was in a class of mine called Art of the Essay, and one of the writers we studied was E. B. White. He became quite enamored of White's style and at the same time wondered what it was like to be a writer—which was his career goal at that

point—and how writers managed to fend off criticism and deal with praise. I suggested to him that he write to E. B. White and ask him, "Which he did. I have a pretty clear memory of him running into class that year waving this letter from E. B. White. And I remember the essence of White's advice was not to be swayed either by public adulation or by public criticism but to remain true to your own voice and ideals and just write from your heart and that all the other stuff was external. I think that made a pretty big impression on Conan."

Conan O'Brien: I got into Harvard and it was about three weeks before you're supposed to show up for freshman week, and I bumped into a friend of mine and he said, "You know what? You should try to write for the *Lampoon*." And I said, "What's that?" And he said, "It's great. They have a building that looks like an animal."

Eric Reif: Conan's college roommate. I think the first piece he ever wrote for the *Lampoon* was this thing called "Conflict: The Sitcom," which was a parody of *One Day at a Time*. It was published in the magazine and senior editors came up to him: Jeff Martin, who wrote for *Letterman* and *The Simpsons*, came up—and said, "That's really great. That's great writing." That's pretty rare. They're a pretty horrible bunch.

Jeff Martin: *Lampoon* alumni and former writer for *Late Night* with David Letterman and *The Simpsons*. The stuff he

wrote that I liked the best was a bunch of Abe Lincoln comics. Just Abe Lincoln in odd situations, but always being very stern and statesmanlike. He'd be in a Soap Box Derby or something and a kid would be going like, "You won, Abe!" And Lincoln would be just sternly saying, "Yes, Corky, but not the race to unite our world."

Mike Reiss: *Lampoon* alumnus and former executive producer of *The Simpsons*. What made everyone take notice of the guy was that he had been elected president of the *Lampoon* in his sophomore year, which just never happened. People wanted to know: Who is this guy?

I was hoping NBC would have considered former *Tonight Show* host David Brenner. I think he's an excellent, proven comedian and would have given Leno and Letterman some solid competition, like Howard Stern.
—A. G. SNIFFEN

Conan O'Brien: A National Honor Society in Noank, Connecticut, invited me to speak. Some guy there had heard of the *Harvard Lampoon*. I drove down with my dad. It was at night. And I did pretty much a stand-up routine at this

Who Is That Young, Carrottop Guy with the Weird Name?

Conan O'Brien

A premature oral history of David Letterman's *Late Night* replacement, a strappin' Christian boy not that long out of college

By
THOMAS
FIELDS-MEYER

National Honor Society convention. I was getting nervous because I remember the person before me talked about taking seriously our rights and responsibilities. And I remember thinking, *Maybe I've really fucked up.* But I just loved it. And they really went for it. And afterward they said, "Well, we had a bake sale to pay for your transportation." And they gave me this shoe box full of nickels and dollar bills and stuff. And I just thought, *This is great, this is a gig. I went down and did a gig in Moank, Connecticut.*

Jeff Martin In 1985 five of us went down to Florida for spring training. Conan started telling people—generally our waiters and waitresses when we'd eat out—that he was Harry Morgan's grandson, Harry Morgan of *M*A*S*H* and *Dragnet* fame. We tried it on about ten different people. "You know, Harry Morgan? On *M*A*S*H*? Colonel Potter?" And they'd say, "Yeah." And he'd go, "He's my grandfather." And the reactions would run from people delighted and wanting to know all about life on the *M*A*S*H* set to "Oh, yeah? Who cares?" But I think most people believed it, because why in the world would you make that up?

Greg Daniels Lampoon columnist and Conan's writing partner. We moved to New York and shared an apartment and we tried to break in somewhere. We did a sample packet of sketches for *Not Necessarily the News*. And my parents and his parents were saying, "Well, you know, you shouldn't put all your eggs in one basket." So we decided we weren't going to hear from the producers, so we went down to a temp agency and tried out to get temp jobs, and we both had terrible typing scores on this test. And when we got home that evening, the producer had called from Los Angeles and she said she wanted to hire us.

Conan O'Brien: I wasn't in L.A. a few months and I went to the Groundlings and said, "I want to be a performer." I started taking classes at the Groundlings, and I realized that what I liked more than writing these things and figuring them out was doing it. I loved doing it. . . . We'd sent material to *Saturday Night Live*, and in January of '88 we got the call.

Mike Myers, cast member *Saturday Night Live* First time I met Conan, I had just arrived. He goes, "Hi, welcome." We chatted for a bit. Then he left a note at my desk that said, "Dear Mike, I will destroy you. I don't know how and I don't know when. But oh, yes, I will destroy you." And the beautiful thing of it is that no one will know I had anything to do with it. Signed, Conan." This was my first day. So I kept that letter. It's up on my corkboard at work.



Conan O'Brien after the unveiling above, *Am* similarly to Vivien Leigh is quite unlikely. In *Jeeter's* garb opposite during college.

Bob Odenkirk, writer *Saturday Night Live* I remember the night I met him. He came into work and he was so nervous and tense. His nerves can really show at times when he's really tense or under a lot of stress. I think he's gotten better at handling it, but in the past it kind of showed. He would rub his hands together—he had some nervous ticks—and I thought, "Oh, my God, the group home let him out for a day."

Kevin Nealon, cast member *Saturday Night Live* He had a real fascination with wing-tip shoes. He had a pair himself that he would wear. And they actually had a couple of holes in the soles. But he would always take them off and set them on the table in front of him, at the writers' table. Just set them up there like they were some fine jewels. And he would just stare at them for a long time, and kind of turn them around, different angles. Facing north for a while. Facing east.

Robert Smigel, writer *Saturday Night Live* One summer Bob Odenkirk and I took all the things we'd written that didn't get on and did a stage show in Chicago, the *Happy Happy Good Show*. That's where the nude-beach sketch we all wrote for SNL was first performed—the infamous penis-repetition sketch. We invited Conan to be a part of it because we knew he liked performing.

Bob Odenkirk He played the Kennedy baby, in which he lay on the floor in a diaper and went, "D'yab-d yab-d yab." Like

the Kennedys do, and just muttering. And no one got it. People in Boston would have loved it.

Conan O'Brien: I remember some of the things I did really alienated the audience. I used to do a thing called Spoon Eye. A woman came out and talked to the audience and said, "Listen, one of our actors, Conan O'Brien, has been working very hard on a character, and he's going to come out here with his character and you just ask him a question, and he can answer any question in character. You ready? Okay." Everyone would applaud and I'd come out just holding a spoon in my eye. Just like a spoon wedged in my eye. And I was going, "Harrumph," talking like a pirate. "Harrumph. I'm Spoon Eye. Hi, everybody, Spoon Eye here!" And so they'd start to ask me questions and what they thought it was going to be was, "We'll ask him, like, what's your favorite song?" And I'll be really clever and say, "Spoon River." That would be it. So they'd ask me those questions. They'd say, "What's your favorite song?" And I'd say, "The Spoony Spoon Song." I mean, I would just be a moron, and they'd get really mad. I just believed that it was really important for me to come out as Spoon Eye.

I pretty much want to copy Kathie Lee and Regis. People love that. Conan O'Brien appearing on David Letterman's *Late Night*

Greg Daniels He did a pilot for Lorne Michaels with Robert Smigel right before he went to *The Simpsons*. It was called *Lookwell* and it starred Adam West [who played Batman on TV]. He had this obsessive interest in Adam West. He really wanted to get Adam West.

Adam West I had a weekend when there was a Batman convention in the East, so I went away to sign autographs and give a little speech. And at that convention, Conan's whole family came to see me. I couldn't believe it.

Conan O'Brien: If you wrote it in a movie they'd say, "Okay, change that. It's stupid that he quits his job and then *The Simpsons* calls him two days later. That's stupid. You're a bad writer." But that's what happened. I got this call from them. They said, "You want to come write for us?"

Dave Reynolds, performer *Happy Happy Good Show* After Conan had been at *The Simpsons* awhile, he was telling me, this new writing team came aboard. They were just really quiet and tentative because Conan was one of the big writers there, and they came in and said, "Hey, is it okay if we borrowed . . ." It was, like, a paper clip or something. And he just grabs his chest, like, "Hhhuaarrggg!" And just throws everything off his desk and falls on the floor and starts convulsing, just, "Uuuh. Uuuh." Put it back. Put it back!" And these guys put the little thing back down and go, "We're really sorry," and he goes, "Uhhh. Uhhh! Close the door on your way out!" They looked at him kind of strangely, and he said, "Do you really want to borrow that paper clip?" "No, that's okay!"

Rob LaZebnik, lampoon columnist, TV comedy writer Three of us drove across the country from New York to L.A. a few years ago. We stopped in Oklahoma City one night just incredibly late. There were a bunch of motels, and they were all booked. We finally stopped at this Ramada Inn and there was this woman at the desk, and Conan asked if she had a room with two beds and a cot, and she said, no, there was no way to get a cot. She was this kind of middle-aged, kind of dowdy-looking woman, and Conan said to her, "Well, ma'am, see the problem is, we're just three strappin' boys right out of college and, well, the idea of two of us sharing a bed together is, well, it's just not Christian." And her face kind of contorted, and she said, "I'll be right back," and then went to the back and wheeled out a cot.

Conan O'Brien: A couple months ago, the Groundlings invited me back to do a guest show. I was real nervous, because I hadn't performed in a while. I was thinking of a million things and performing and going off on tangents, and at the end of the show I was so wired and so excited that I just got in my car and drove around L.A. for, like, two hours because I couldn't go to sleep. Because I had been on a stage in front of people performing and getting a lot of laughs and loving every second of it. And I decided then that I wasn't going to go on when my contract expired at *The Simpsons*.

Lorne Michaels I was with him when Lorne Michaels called him and said [the 12:30 A.M. slot] was an option. And he was like, "Yes! This is what I should do! This is what I have to do!"

Lorne Michaels, executive producer *Saturday Night Live* We never really considered him as a sketch player because the way in which he is funny is at being himself. In the early days of the show, Chevy, who was a writer before we went on the air, was also somebody who was really funny in the office and funny being Chevy. And not to diminish Chevy's ability as a sketch

player, but he wasn't the same kind of sketch player that Dan Aykroyd and John Belushi and Bill Murray were. Chevy was funny being Chevy, and I think Conan's funny being Conan.

Conan O'Brien (before NBC's offer, over a Sam Adams at his two-bedroom, West Hollywood apartment, asked whether he had more time to talk): Oh, I can—a few more beers, you know, it'll be a whole article about how I'm realizing I'm gay or something. Give it a whole different spin. Now, where was I?

Josh Weinstein, co-producer, *The Simpsons* We were going to record an episode. We all sat down at the table. And then right before we got started, he got a call and left and then he never came back to the room. And then he came in later in the afternoon and said, "Well, I got the 12:30." He seemed sort of stunned. It was obviously the hugest thing that had ever happened to him.

Conan O'Brien (later that week, from a phone booth at LAX, en route to his first press conference in New York): I got a telephone call from my agent in the morning and that day it just took off immediately. There wasn't time to just celebrate. I did not get a chance to say, "Wow, this is terrific." I just had to go immediately. They ran me over to the Leno show at the last minute. I just ran out there and said, "Hi, America—I'll see you later." It's just crazy. The next morning I'm walking through Westwood and my picture's in *USA Today*. It's the worst picture of me ever taken. It looked like a satellite photo. . . . I've always fantasized about being famous. I've always fantasized about being a performer, having people recognize me. But that's a fantasy for a lot of people. When it really starts to happen, there is something creepy about it.

Trying to get him to face a particular direction, photographers barked out his name in any of several ways, in one case simply addressing him as "Mr. Replacement."

Associated Press description of O'Brien's New York press conference

Ruth O'Brien I just hope that he'll enjoy it. All any mother wants for any of her children is that they find a job that will be interesting and fulfilling, and all you want for your children is that they have a nice life.

Lorne Michaels It's hard when you know somebody to say, "Well, all right, this person's going to be Scarlett O'Hara." But I hope he turns out as well as Vivien Leigh did.

Advertisers are expected to renegotiate third-quarter buys on NBC's *Late Night* with David Letterman and seek as much as a 50 percent price reduction following the network's decision to replace David Letterman with an unknown comedy writer. Advertising Age

Conan O'Brien: Have you ever been on one of those roads—you want to get on a highway and there's a highway right next to you and you're on some access road, and you're driving along next to it and you're looking over at the highway, which is where you're supposed to be, and it's right there, and you're going the same way, but you're not on the highway and there's a no fucking access road? That's what it's felt like for me for a long time. I can see people on the highway and they're waving, and I'm on the road going, "Yeah!" And I'm trying to get over there but there's no way. And I would kill to get on that highway is basically what it comes down to. And if this is my access road, I'm going to take it and run with it and wait till they rip me off the air. 12





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THE BEGINNING



AND THE END



OF EVERYTHING

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COMET

Life and
Death

BY JAMES SALTER

ADELE MARRIED PHIL ARDET on a day in June. It was cloudy, the wind blowing. Later the sun came out. It had been a while since she'd been married and she wore white: white pumps with low heels, a long, white skirt that clung to her hips, a filmy blouse with a white bra underneath, and around her neck a string of freshwater pearls. They were married in her house, the one she'd gotten in the divorce. All her friends were there. The room was crowded. "I, Adele," she said in a clear

voice "give myself to you, Philip, completely as your wife." Behind her as best man, somewhat oblivious, her young son was standing and pinned to her panties as something borrowed was a small silver disk, actually a Saint Christopher's medal her father had worn in pilot training. She had several times rolled down the waistband of her skirt to show it to people. Near the door, under the mistaken impression that it was part of a garden tour, was an old woman who held a little dog by the handle of a cane hooked through his collar.

At the reception she drank too much, laughed, and scratched her bare arms with long show girl nails. Her new husband could have licked her palms as a calf does salt. She was still young enough to be good-looking, the final blaze of it, though too old for children at least if she had anything to say about it. Summer was approaching. Out of the afternoon haze she would come in her black bathing suit, limbs all tan, the brilliant sun behind her. She was the dark figure walking up the smooth sand from the sea, her legs, her wet swimmer's hair, the grace of her, all careless and unhurried.

They settled into life together hers mostly. It was her furniture and her books, though they were largely unread. She liked to tell stories about Renzi, her first husband—Frank, his name was—the heir to a garbage hauling empire. She called him Frenzi, but the stories were not unaffectionate. Loyalty—perhaps implanted during those years, eight exhausting years, as she said—was her code. The marriage terms had been simple, she admitted. Her job was to be dressed, have dinner ready and be fucked once a day. One time in Florida with another couple they chartered a boat to go honeymooning off Bimini. "We'll have a good dinner," the garbage heir said, "get on board and turn in. When we get up we'll have passed the Gulf Stream." It began that way but ended differently. The sea was very rough. They never did cross the Gulf Stream—the captain was from Long Island and got lost. Renzi paid him fifty dollars to turn over the wheel. "Do you know anything about boats?" the captain asked. "More than you do," Renzi told him. He was under an ultimatum from Adele, who was lying, deathly white, in their cabin. "Get us into port somewhere or get ready to sleep by yourself."

Phil Ardet heard the story and many others often. He was manly and elegant, his head held back a bit as he talked, as though you were a menu. He and Adele had met on the golf course when she was learning to play. It was a wet day, the course nearly empty. Adele and a friend were teeing off when a balding figure carrying a cloth bag with a few clubs in it asked if he could join them. Adele hit a passable drive. Her friend bounced his across the road and teed up another, which he topped. Phil almost shyly took out an old three wood and hit one two hundred yards straight down the fairway.

That was his persona, capable but mad. He'd gone to Princeton and been in the Navy. He looked like someone who'd been in

the Navy—his legs were strong. The first time Adele went out with him, he remarked it was a funny thing, some people liked him, some didn't. "The ones that do, I tend to lose interest in." She wasn't sure what that meant but she liked his appearance, which was a bit worn, especially around the eyes. It made her feel he was a real man though perhaps not the man he had been. Also he was smart, more or less the way professors were.

To be liked by her was worthwhile but to be liked by him seemed of even greater value. There was something about him that discounted the world. He appeared in a way to care nothing for himself, to be above that.

He didn't make much money, it turned out. He wrote for a business weekly. She earned nearly that much selling houses. She had begun to put on a little weight. She was still beautiful—her face was—but she had adopted a more comfortable profile. She would get into bed with a drink, the way she had done when she was twenty-five. Phil, a sport jacket over his pajamas, sat reading

THIS SPRING, IN ASPEN, James Salter took time out from his memoirs of life as soldier, expatriate, and writer to compose "Comet." "I was thinking of men and women, and how deep the wounds can be, of things I knew, things I'd heard," he says. The heart of the story is based in reality, but Salter added details to make it "more visible than life, with all of life's digressions."

Sometimes he walked that way on their lawn in the morning. She sipped her drink and watched him. "You know something?"

"What?"

"I've had good sex since I was fifteen," she said.

He looked up. "I didn't start quite that young," he confessed.

"Maybe you should have."

"Good advice. Little late though."

"Do you remember when we first got started?"

"I remember."

"We could hardly stop," she said. "You remember?"

"It averages out."

"Oh, great," she said.

After he'd gone to sleep she watched a movie. The stars grew old, too, and had problems with love. It was different, though—they had already reaped huge rewards. She watched, thinking. She thought of what she had been, what she had had.

What did Phil know? he was sleeping.

Autumn came. One evening they were at the Guireys—Guirey was a tall lawyer, the executor of some estates and trustee of others. Reading was his true education, a look into the human heart, he said.

At the dinner table was a man from Los Angeles who'd made

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a fortune in computers a nitwit it turned out who during the meal gave a toast "To the end of privacy and the life of dignity," he said. He was with a dampened woman who had just found out that her husband had been having an affair with a black woman in Cleveland, an affair that had somehow been going on for seven years. There may even have been a child. "You can see why coming here is like a breath of fresh air for me," she said.

The women were sympathetic. They knew what she had to do—she had to rethink completely the past seven years.

"That's right," her companion agreed.

"What is there to be rethought?" Phil wanted to know.

He was answered impatiently. The deception, they said, the deception she had been deceived all that time. Adele meanwhile was pouring more wine for herself. Her napkin covered the place where she had already spilled a glass of it.

"But that time was spent in happiness, wasn't it?" Phil said guilelessly. "That's been lived. It can't be changed." The professor was talking. "It can't be turned into unhappiness."

"The woman stole my husband. She stole everything he meant."

"Forgive me," Phil said. "That happens every day."

There was an outcry as if from a chorus, heads thrust forward like the hissing, sacred geese. Only Adele was silent.

"Every day," he said, his voice drowned out the voice of reason or at least of tact.

"I'd never steal anyone's man," Adele said then. "Never." Her face had a tone of weariness when she drank a weariness that knew the answer to everything. "And I'd never break a vow."

"I don't think you would," he said.

"I'd never fall for a twenty-year-old either," she said.

She was talking about the tutor, the girl who had come that time, youth burning through her clothes.

"No, you wouldn't."

"He left his wife," Adele told them.

There was silence. Phil's hat smile had gone but his face was still pleasant. "I didn't leave my wife," he said. "She threw me out."

"He left his wife and children," Adele said.

"I didn't leave them. Anyway it was over between us. It had been for more than a year." He said it evenly, as if it had happened to someone else. "It was my son's tutor. I fell in love with her."

"And you began something with her?" Guirey said urbanely.

"Oh, yes." There is love when you lose the power to speak, when you cannot even breathe. "Within two or three days."

"There in the house?"

He shook his head, he was abandoning himself. "I didn't do anything in the house."

"He left his wife and children," Adele repeated.

"You knew that," Phil said.

"Just walked out on them. They'd been married fifteen years since he was nineteen."

"We hadn't been married fifteen years."

"They had three children," she said, "one of them retarded."

Something had happened, he was becoming speechless, he could feel it in his chest like a kind of nausea. As if he were giving up portions of an intimate past, he managed to say, "He wasn't retarded. He was having trouble learning to read, that's all."

At that instant an image of himself and his son from years before came to him. They had rowed one afternoon to the middle of a friend's pond and jumped in, just the two of them. It was summer. His son was six or seven. There was a layer of warm water over deeper, cooler water, the faded green of frogs and weeds. They swam for the far side and then all the way back, the blond head and anxious face of his boy above the surface like a dog's. Year of joy.

"So tell them the rest of it," Adele said.

"There is no rest."

"It turned out this tutor was some kind of high-class call girl. He found her in bed with some guy."

"Is that right?" Guirey said. He was leaning on the table, his chin in his hand. You think you know someone, he was thinking, you think because you have dinner with them or play cards, but really you're afraid to, afraid of the resemblance.

"It didn't matter," Phil murmured.

"So stupid marries her anyway," Adele said. "She comes to Mexico City where he's working and he marries her."

"You don't understand anything, Adele," he said. He wanted to say more but couldn't. It was like being out of breath.

"Do you still talk to her?" Guirey asked casually.

"Yes, over my dead body," Adele said.

None of them could visualize Mexico City and the first ecstatic year, driving down to the coast for the weekend, through Cuernavaca, her bare legs beside him with the sun lying on them, her arms the dizziness and submission he felt with her as before a forbidden photograph, as before an overwhelming work of art. Two years in Mexico City ignoring the wreckage. It was the sense of godliness that empowered him. He could see her neck bent forward with its slender nape. He could see the small bones like pearls that ran down her smooth back. He could see himself, his former self.

"I talk to her," he admitted.

"And your first wife?"

"I talk to her. We have three kids."

"He left her," Adele said. "Old Three Wood."

Some women have minds like cops. This is right, that's wrong. Well, anyway," he said, standing up. He realized he had done everything wrong, in the wrong order, scuttled his life. "There's one thing, though. I can say it truthfully. I'd do it again if I had the chance."

They went on talking after he had gone outside. The woman whose husband had been unfaithful for seven years knew what it was like. She said, "I've had the same thing happen. I was going by Bergdorf's one day and saw a green coat in the window that I liked and I went in and bought it. Then a little while later, someplace else I saw one that was better than the first one, so I bought that. Any way, by the time I was finished I had four green coats hanging in the closet—it was just because I couldn't control my desires."

The sky outside, the topmost dome of it, was brushed with clouds and the stars were dim. Adele finally made him out, standing far off in the darkness. She walked unsteadily toward him. His head she saw was raised. She stopped a few yards away and raised her head, too. The sky began to whirl. She took a step or two to steady herself. "What are you looking at?" she finally said.

He did not answer. He had no intention of answering. "The comet. It's been in the papers. This is the night it's supposed to be the most visible."

There was silence.

"I don't see any comet," she said.

"It's right up there," he gestured. "It doesn't look like anything, just like another small star. It's that extra one, by the Pleiades." He knew all the constellations. He had seen them rise in darkness over heartbreaking coasts.

"Come on, you can look at it tomorrow," she said almost consoingly, though she came no closer to him.

"It won't be there tomorrow. One time only."

"How do you know where it'll be?" she said. "Come on, let's get out of here."

He did not move. After a moment she walked toward the house in which, extravagantly, every window upstairs and down was lit. He stood where he was, looking up at the sky and then at her as she became smaller and smaller across the lawn, reaching first the aura, then the brightness, then tripping on the kitchen stairs.

Drinking,
driving,
and monster
caterpillars

IT'S NOT
THAT I'M
LYING

BY ANN BEATTIE

I WAS CHASED BY A POLICE CAR on the highway outside Boston. I was drunk, speeding, doing a real Joan Kennedy, apparently, and when I saw the damned cop car I knew I'd really had it because there were already three speeding tickets that year, and the fourth was going to mean my license got yanked. So I decided to make a run for it, turning off the headlights as I took the exit into some godforsaken place like Methuen or Amesbury, or one of those godforsaken places full of those people who honk like geese instead of talking—just filling stations and doughnut places and anonymity, with the big thrill being a trek into Beantown to look at the seals applauding for the crowd, or whatever they do once they've been captured in the aquarium, and maybe eat something in the Italian section. A big day of sharks and cannoli. Really godforsaken places. I was going eighty, maybe ninety tops, and as I killed the headlights

and had the wheel tight, knowing not to brake because then the cops would have little red lights to follow—as I took the ramp, I had a delusion which was that I was in the first car at Space Mountain steering the thing, responsible for all the people in the cars behind me the way a caterpillar's head is responsible for its body. I wasn't pretending or remembering being at Disneyland, I was genuinely delusional, and not for the first time in my life, that was the thing that helped me. Because I felt crazed by responsibility—the brain of a great caterpillar pulling a body that might go out of control without my guidance. A sort of *catcher in the Rye* mind set, a little martyrdom there, thinking I was saving the whole chain of riders behind me, not just turning off into Methuen or some godforsaken place to avoid a fourth speeding ticket. Speeding tickets. They gave them to you for ten miles over the limit on a deserted road, even eight miles, if they want the money bad enough. One of the tickets had been for failing to stop at a crossroads, and even though I could prove the yellow light was out of commission, they had me on the drunk driving, no doubt about it. Half a bottle of champagne at the Charles Hotel, and a brandy or so after that, plus it was freezing cold and I'd never been so depressed in my life because my best friend was marrying a Chinese man who'd already beat her up twice and didn't apologize very convincingly after the second episode—I could see just now her. He was going to turn out, imagine all the worse things I'd be drinking through the years, sympathizing with her and not in any place as classy as the Charles Hotel that I could be sure of. So that ticket was my first present of the new year, and later they got me for rear-ending morons in a van that stopped dead in the middle of the street for no reason, managed to ticket me because the back of the van ended up accordion-folded right to the wheel, though the idiot hippie driver had jumped out, no time to drive, but he found the time to jump out when he saw me coming, and as I say, I was coming because I was driving. I was living in the world that day, on automatic pilot, like everybody else, when the fuckng idiot stopped dead, and with

people in the lane next to me there was nowhere for me to go but to fly into his purple and orange sunset painted across the back, crumple his damned sunset into abstract art, with Jerry Garcia's face beaming above me as I went under like some ghoul over a fun-house mirror. The hippie wasn't wearing any shoes. January in Boston and he's in sandals, standing there screaming, "Look what she did! Look what the crazy fucking bitch did!" I like it was my pleasure to risk decapitating myself by slamming through the hippiemobile. Then there was one other ticket for something else, something entirely pointless, like missing a stop sign when there were no other cars around anyway—does that bring it up to three tickets? On what would have been the fourth, though I experienced a delusion, and during the delusion I felt invincible, or at the very least called upon, called upon by the ribs and the backbone of the caterpillar to see that it could continue to suther onward. By this time the delusion was no longer clear, but my body was pumping adrenaline so fast, and apparently I had the good sense never even to touch the brake lights, so when I finally lost some speed and pulled into some godforsaken parking lot, the cop car was wry behind me. I don't even think they tried to keep up, in fact I know that's the case, because it was the state cops on the highway, and they wouldn't have had any jurisdiction to arrest me in Amesbury, or wherever it was I'd driven into, and the local cops were probably all having a burger together, or giving each other blowjobs. I don't know why they didn't want to bother to respond. There was an article in the paper that explains what went wrong, but I didn't commit it to memory. So there I was, in what I thought was a big parking lot, handings on both sides of me, some fenced in, or behind it, and once I stopped driving the alcohol took over, and the adrenaline disappeared, and I started to be very frightened the cops were going to find me and know I was drunk, so I jumped the fence. It turns out I was in a lumberyard, where you'd think they'd have Dobermans patrolling it, but it was my good luck they didn't. Lumberyards like Dobermans the way firemen like Dalmatians. Anyway, there

IT'S NOT THAT I'M LYING BY ANN BEATTIE

was just the recording, like the voice on the train at the Atlanta airport, a computer voice recorded off a robot or something, the voice saying, "You have entered a secured area. You have ten seconds to leave." Ten seconds? The way I'd been moving in the car I could have covered three miles in that time, but I stood there and my feet were dead, I was terrified. The image of a monster caterpillar being devoured by a Doberman came into my mind as a delusion. I couldn't move my body but as I faded into and out of the delusion I remembered the cops had been chasing me, thought they'd put two and two together, thought I was going to lose my driver's license for sure, like maybe one would hold it in the air and the other would shoot through the little picture on it, like what's his name that shot an apple off somebody's head with an arrow, or the way they pick up the scissors in a store and cut your credit card in half if they call and you don't have their almighty approval to charge what you're charging. It's a real indignity, like somebody reaching under into your toilet stall, and taking the toilet paper while you're sitting there—even that is more private. Next, the lights came on, followed by a siren, the like of which I have never heard before, something that's got speakers buried in every bush, or probably it's planted in the ground, like a land mine in Vietnam, if the thing doesn't explode and kill you, you're still going to come out of there like Marlee Matlin, who is very, very deaf. So there I am. My knees locked in fear, my pants pissed, apparently, my feet as heavy as lead, no way to even wiggle a toe, these lights above me like it's a runway, and they're bringing in the Concorde for a crash landing. I was once in a crash landing, by the way. They blew some sort of foam on the runway and we

soared through it like a bullet through a mound of snow, and nobody was hurt except one woman whose mouth was a bloody mess from having down hard on her purse, which she'd stuffed in her mouth like it was a mint on the pillow of her turned-down bed. They do that at the Charles Hotel, for you turn down and mint. A very nice place, with a bar that's like your own living room. So there I stand and along comes a cop car. I see the light revolving, there's cops with guns pulled and even more lights shining, lights into the light, and there I am with my pissed pants, having escaped them to that point, but knowing that even though I'll think of a lie to explain what I'm doing there, they're bound to know I'm the one who was in the car because between blowjobs they have radios they use to talk back and forth to one another, laughing with the dispatchers like in the Rodney King case. Then from that point on I remember nothing. I hear them talking and opening the gate. I'm blinded by the light and deaf from the noise—all this to protect against the hordes of Americans who would take their precious two-by-fours or whatever, all the masses of people who need to build freestanding back decks or put up kitchen shelves so their wives will leave them in peace. Of course they have a description of the car, and apparently I left the car running, though that's what they say I wouldn't swear to. Suddenly they've got their own goddamn dog, Heinrich the German shepherd or whatever he is, teeth as shiny as the lights and raring to go, then apparently I took in this sight and collapsed, and then I must have gone to the hospital, and someone somewhere called the lawyer, Vincent was called, in Rhode Island where he was with our baby in some fisherman's shack painted

inside over the wallboard to look like it was marble, some place done by New York decorators as a guesthouse—that's what it was—it was the guesthouse on the property of some friend of Vincent's, whose woman had a child of her own the same age as Hugh, so for all I know it was one big happy family, or at least a ménage à trois, with the woman and her husband and Vincent all living in their fake marble faux-fishing shack, faxing the broker and playing patty cake with the kids. In the hospital, where I went after my day at the Charles Hotel with my friend and our subsequent drinking, after the car chase and my bad idea of jumping into the back of a lumberyard. I at first believed, when I was admitted, that I had been fleeing my husband, who had been monstrous, who had led a monstrous life, involving me in the ritualistic sacrifice of human infants in our rented house, the one we had in Haverth, just after we got married. I was delusional. I had increasing problems with alcohol. I was adversely affected by drugs that did something to me long term, not just when I was taking them—in short, as they say when they've said all they want to say and then want to convince you their story is quite succinct,

EVEN THOUGH SHE'S PUBLISHED FOUR NOVELS, among them *Falling in Place* and *Picturing Will*, Ann Beattie hardly feels proprietary about the genre. A resident of Charlottesville, Virginia, where she lives with her husband, the painter Lincoln Perry, Beattie regards herself primarily as a short-story writer, pleased that she can knock out a story in a day and be done with it. Ironically, this particular story grew out of her next novel. "I was trying to better understand a husband in the book and I ended up writing about his wife, who may appear in all of one line of the novel." Was writing the story sufficient reprieve from the rigors of a novel? "Hey," Beattie says, laughing, "a crossword puzzle is a reprieve from a novel."

or has been quite succinct. In short, I was unable to distinguish what was true from what I imagined to be true, though now I realize that my husband was not in collusion with Satan, and probably a miscarriage I suffered before I had Hugh depressed me more than I realized, and in my delusions I thought the suctioning of the fetus in the hospital was something done not by a doctor but by my husband, and that it had been done not to me but observed by me. All of this a mental impairment caused by PCP which I obtained illegally from a Chinese man, my friend later got engaged and married to and with whom I had a brief affair. You realize, doctor, that because I am constantly asked to tell the same story naturally I get bored and omit parts of it or give special emphasis to some things some days, and others another day. It's not that I'm lying, it's just that the sanest person you could find would occasionally contradict herself if asked over and over for the same information. I do try to be consistent in pointing out that I suffered delusions, and I take responsibility for taking drugs and drinking quantities of alcohol. I also realize my hatred toward my husband is abnormal, and that my husband never murdered anyone, infants included. You know *Portney's Complaint*? The book with the famous last line that goes something like, "And so, doctor, now can we begin?" I wonder, because you've listened so respectfully, whether I could provoke just the smallest comment from you? How do my chances seem for being discharged for the weekend? We don't have Jeffrey Dahmer here. We just have a former alcoholic, and drug abuser who couldn't get a cigarette if she blew the whole hospital staff and who has now gained insight into her former delusions. ■

SPECK

At
Lost Man's
River

IN THE

GLADES

BY JEFFREY MAYER

TOWARD SUNDOWN an ancient cabin boat appeared off Lost Man's Beach, bound north from the direction of Shark River. Though the tide was low, she made her way at near full speed among the oyster bars, circling in off the sandy point with a grumpy gurgling and pop of her old engine and grinding her bow right up onto the beach. ¶ An old voice hailed the people on the point. ¶ "You fellers seen any fish round here that might like a ride in this old boat?" ¶ "Oh, Lord," Sally said, disgusted. She rose and walked off down the beach. ¶ "Well, now, old-timer," Whidden yelled, "are you lost or what? Maybe your eyesight ain't so good no more. This here's Miami!" ¶ "That a fact?" The old boatman heaved out a stern anchor—*ker-plunk*—then put his hands up on his hips, looking around him at the mangrove and old river. "Well, if I am lost, which ain't too likely, I found the right place to be lost in, looks like to me!" ¶ "Hell, I know that feller," the blind man said, starting to smile. ¶ Whidden was yelling, "Well, come on ashore, Speck, get something to eat!" ¶ "Sure it's safe for a old man over there? Don't that ol' scow belong to one them Hardens? What you damn fellers doing this far south? I thought you was in jail!" ¶ The old man—big hands on thick

brown arms, scrawny white legs, rolled up baggy pants, and cowered himself painfully into the water. "Might hurt my pride and joy, y'know. Been over my dad's here before I know it." Slogging ashore, he glanced in the direction of Sally, who was down the beach, then hitched the crotch of his discolored old pants, hung low on gal-luses. Flaming and wheezing, he secured his bow line to a silvered driftwood tree high on the beach. "Case you boys don't know it, this here is my private snag. There'd be hell to pay if I found one of your damn ropes hitched onto it." Speck Daniels ambled over to their fire and shook hands with Whidden. Old as he was, Speck had dark streaks in his hair and thick black brows over a hawk nose. His sun-dark mangrove hide was guttered and the nose lumpy with drink, but his strong hair fell boy-sly across his brow, and the pupils were bright, an animal's green eyes. Besides old pants and brown gal-luses, he wore a long-sleeved undershirt of red flannel and a black city hat with a green feather. Luke Watson supposed it was a parrot feather until he realized that it was painted on. Speck was so pleased to see Andy House that he started yelling, "God struck you so blind you don't even know who you're talkin' to no more? Well, that's pretty good." "I can still hear you, can't I? And smile, you too!" Andy was

laughing, and he hung on to Speck's hand. "Good Lord, I sure we'd hate to be as old as you!" Oh, I smell pretty sweet, all right for an old feller! Speck took a long, pleased sniff under his own arm, then bent to Andy, lowering his voice to a hoarse whisper, plenty loud enough for all to hear. One them damn Hardens—now I ain't sayin' which one case he feel shy about it—he made him some big money runnin' guns before he quit, but he won't pay the \$700 he still owes me for nothin' in the world but gas and groceries!" Speck raised his eyebrows in disbelief, gazing from one face to the next for an explanation of such pettish. "Last time I seen him, he told me, 'Speck, you get that money, boy, you ain't got one thing in the world to worry about.' He smiled at Whidden Harden. And I told him, 'I says, 'Boy, I might look like a spring chicken, but I ain't gettin' one bit younger.' And he says, 'Speck, you kick the fuck'n' bucket 'fore you get your money, you won't have a thing to worry about, neither!'" "Your language ain't improved, I see." "Weren't my language. That were your own uncle talkin'." Whidden, unoffended, said, "There's a lady up the beach is a!"

Speck gazed at her, who had her back to him. She was bending over to pick up a stick, and he took his time surveying her hind aspect.

"Well, she's a lovely little thing. I can see that right from here. I sure hope I don't see her at a wedding."

"Those are words that a woman would like."

"God Almighty!" in prayer. Speck put his hand over his eyes. "Ain't he a pity?" He contemplated Whidden without pleasure. "Got you passed whipped and that right. Whidden? Ran out on you, I heard. Ain't seen my own damn daughter no more on stage. He stomped around, kicking away from her. "That girl is a tough customer and then some. For tough, she is."

Andy House said dryly, "You're still taking care of the ladies. Pretty good, seems like."

"Ain't been no complaints at all is it lately?" "Conspirator," the old man talked behind his hand. "Don't know about

and glad to get it. That's how come we call 'em Conches. I guess 'ese to land one half million pounds of good fish every year by the end of the year. I was doing good to land one tenth of it. Now they want it as commercial fish and that's how bad it is, and this was one of the great fisheries of the whole world."

Yes, when the Parks came in, they told us. If we left our homesteads peaceable, we could set net out of Flamingo for the rest of our natural life. For some damn reason, I thought their word was good. Man's only as good as his word, we used to say, and this was his damn government.

"I never knew the U.S. government would tell a barefaced lie like that. If them damn bureaucrats and politicians can get away with it, they steal you blind. Hypocrites and liars right up to the President. Just tell the stupid ass damn public any damn old thing to keep their ass covered. This is the greatest country in the world, it had me to speak had about my country, but the truth is the truth." Speck

gasped for breath. Hell, I ain't talk to my own country, not no more. A man can't trust one word they say that ain't wet down in black and white, signed, sealed, and hand delivered, and even then, it ain't mean a damn shit, they ain't. And why? Screw you, the same. I got an idea now how them Injuns must of let about all them broken treaties, been lied to and stole off of, and generally fucked over for two hundred years.

"Werent that the way you was brought up? To trust the government?" He spat into the flames. "Well, now they screwed up the whole Everglades, and they ain't no fish in it anyway, so it don't matter."

"My granddaddy died in 1945, two years before they put in the damned park. He sure hit a lucky streak when he done that. That park coming in beat anything I ever saw. Told us we could live there at Flamingo and commercial

fish right where we was before the rest of our natural lives, and turned right around once they got in, just threw us out."

We moved over to Homestead, that was just offered us two dollars in there, got a little more, got seven or eight thousand for everything taken for don't Parks burnt our fish houses, burnt food racks and, that's what you know, a third bird work wasted. You take fellers like us, fishing, and we ever done, we knew to do. I don't understand how they could go and burn up that hard hand work. I just don't understand the stupid waste of it. And then they rise up half a hell when us poor fellers went over to hunting crocs and gators in the park. Well, now, them things is all dead off for lack of good freshwater in the Glades, we're back to smug in, just like our daddies done, and granddaddies, too. Ingrate plumes and better egrets, gators and gator hats, it just don't matter. The law can't catch us back here in amongst these mangroves and a never could.

One time a feller from St. August he got him a 200, he paid me to hunt him up some crocs. Sure enough, he shows up at my house one evening, got him a croc, a diles."

"I says, 'Sure thing, they's sixteen right out back. But when I picked my head around, he was dead. I seen what there was a cad, a con-artist. What in the hell you a damn fool, am I?' I says, 'Muh-ah, he says,

"Your car? Why, hell, I says, 'I got one here that goes two ve feet, fill that whole cad face'."

"Twelve feet," he hectors. "I want that, an now."

"Se we jump in that croc and rissie him around, roll him up into a ha, got him humped some way into the trunk, that tail rang out, ke a dang male in a snail still. I ting the smaller ones in the backseat, they hit that ve veteen, just a snappin' and a crappin', and this croc tane er don't mind one bit. Takes off for St. Augustine bumping the ground with the load of crocs he's got in there, left a big cluggy cloud of smoke right in my yard."

"Next time he showed up, he bought him a hen crocodile, he had a big hump on her shoulders, big as a coconut said. That 'an don't look so good, I'll give you ten down and twenty five on top if she goes two weeks. So he sent a envelope without no money into it, nouthed me she had apped and died. Well, the next year I was going through St. Augustine, stopped over to see him and there was my humped up crocodile, star of the show."

"So I says, 'My my, that pretty little hen you got in there, damped if she don't look some way, am I?'" Speck nodded a little at the memory. "Well, you fellers know something? I must've hurt that feller's feelings. 'Cause he hector'd out. No, no, no, that there ain't no fear of her at all!" Speck nodded more. "That's the way we live it, 'cause I didn't have no brand on her nor pedgree nor nothin'." The old man sighed. "That feller had him a good head for the croc business, is what it was. That's how you got you one them Cadillac convertibles, I reckon."

"I used to be plenty of crocodiles down Florida Bay. I guess I could still find a few, but I'd have to hunt for 'em. When the Parks took over, anytime you showed me one crocodile east of the park, I could take you in the park and show you fifty. Today any crocodile you show me in the park, I'll take you outside and show you five."

Speck Daniels spat into the flames. "I told 'em, 'You're so worried about the crocodiles, but you're the ones to blame, 'cause you go down there go messin' with the nest. It's just like birds, you keep messin' with the nest, they're goin' to leave it. Said, 'You went down there and caught them crocs, put beepers on 'em, electronic fuckin' apparatus to where you can follow 'em around two miles away. It's like a damn horse, you tie a kerchief to his tail, he'll run himself to death trying to get rid of it. Can't find no crocs to hang beepers on no more, but you still got the guts to wonder what become of 'em'."

Whidden poked the fire. "Bill Smalwood was tellin' me how back in the fifties you could see lots of crocs from the Key West Highway if you knew what you was looking for."

Well, to see one now, you got to organize a damn safari, and," Speck said, "even then, you got to night-light 'em and even then, all you might get is a puff of mud or a little fur off a ripple croc, the water. He spat violently again. "Cause they just ain't no crocodiles no more, them big old crocs, are few and far between, and they are by no manner it means the only old time critters that are going. Look at your sawfish, sea turtles, your manatees, your bears and panthers. Them things was common all around these rivers in my daddy's time. And them ingrettes, more scarce today than what they was when every cracker in south Florida was a damn plume hunter! It's like I told Parks, 'If you go on like this, you'll have a big dead country in your hands, is a damn just dead water and mud, sawgrass and mangrove."

Them bureaucrats admitted right in public that wild, our legged critters was down 90 percent and the birds 63 percent. I said, 'You a min' to wait until the other 37 percent is gone before you admit you don't know what you're doin'?"

"Cut the water down south from Okeechobee and just run into the Everglades, is what they done. Ruined one of the greatest

fisheries, wrecked the most beautiful country in the world. It's just layin' out there now, no use to nobody."

Speck gazed around the fire. His good mood was gone.

"Damn Parks run me off again. Never thought they'd pick on a poor old feller just livin' his life away back in the rivers, but they sure did. Damn hee-ee-ee-ee racketin' in just like them war movies. I told them greenhorn ranger sonabitches I was there on the advice of my physician, 'You're dead within the year, Speck Daniels. If you don't stop drinkin', better go back out in the dang swamp, I that's what I take to get water, quit.' Well, men--th is me talkin' to them greenhorns. 'Well, men, that's just what I done. I says, 'Men, if I go back to hamankind, I get a dretta kind of ringin' in my ears from a their racket, got to drink up every last drop I can find just to drown 'em out.'"

"Well, they wasn't used to that kind of smooth talk, not from a swamp rat. It was plain they was startin' to look at things my way. A, but one, some kind of a foreign lookin' cuss, might could been some kind of a Jew, feller from New York City. This Jew says, 'See here, old man, what's all these orchids and damn ags?' Speck fished a striped tree snail from his pocket. "Liquis is the ugly name them Latin people give this pretty little thing, don't you ask me why. Anyway, this feller says, 'What's all these ligs you got here in your boot?' Them ags is federal property, old feller property of the American damn people. Don't you know them things is gettin' rare and scarce?"

"Nossir," says I. "I never knew no such of a thing! Why, if I'da knowed ags was so scarce, I'da gone into them hammocks and stole every Christly one I could lay my hands on, make me some money to see me through my own decrepitude." Nossir, I says, "What I am doing out here in these swamps, I am observin' big behav'or. I'm one of your famous ligs, orchids and a orchid fancier to boot."

Nossir, th's Parks greenhorn says, "What you are is a liar, 'cause ags ain't got no dang behavior. Ligs just sets there manin' the r own business. What you are is a liar and a lawbreaker! And gator on eighty is too darn old, or such a scallawag! 'Caded me a scallawag. That was the dirtiest word that you could call a man back in my granddaddy's time! Took my ags and took my orchids and ran me off with a last warning. They didn't want to look plain foolish dragging a crippled up old alk into court, is what it was."

"Them fellers was just pure y pissed off, they could n't find nothin' in my natur' in my boat. Ligs and orchids ain't the same as guns or gator flats. Them greenhorn sonabitches knew that a 'Speck Daniels had given 'em the slip! Done it again."

"Well, I'll help a few snook escape out of this park. If I can find some Snook, I'll take 'em to the restaurants you know. Ain't owed to net 'em in the park no more, but they can't catch a fisherman that can't catch fish, now can they?"

Toward midnight it began to rain. At daybreak, far out on the Gulf, a growing, ght edged the dark cloud rims with silver, and the sea was smooth after the rain. All around the wall of mangrove, harboring the nighttime was still black.

Speck's ancient boat was gone. He had slipped his lines and drifted down the channel before starting his engine, for they never heard him.

"Does he ever say goodbye?" Luke whispered.

"Not if he can help it," Whidden told him.

They took the skiff up Lost Man's River, fishing the current points for sea trout. Whidden pointed. The gray calm face of water broke in swirls and swirls of unseen fish.

The sun loomed in the hazy trees eastward. Beyond the trees, a few miles away inland, lay the broad sawgrass swales, the everglades, the Glades.

FOR PETER MATTHIESSEN, MAN IS MERELY one among a variety of interesting animals. In the character of Speck Daniels, he has created one of the more irascible and profane creatures in the Matthiessen canon, but the author nevertheless feels a twinge of affinity for the renegade Speck, who rails away in this excerpt from the next volume of the trilogy that began with *Killing Mister Watson*. "Speck is a cranky type and so am I," he says. "He also turns out to be foulmouthed and irreverent, a racist and a criminal. That he is funny and colorful does not excuse him, but at least he is authentic, and he knows and loves the Everglades." Matthiessen first encountered the Glades on a family trip when he was ten or twelve. "I was so fanatic about birds that I scarcely saw the Indians down there, that's how busy I was peering upward and outward." Since then, the Everglades and its wildlife have been all but destroyed, says Matthiessen, who blames "ill-conceived drainage schemes, ignorant meddling, and the alliance between government and agribusiness."

ages, exactly, but I feel me a certain piece of loss, seems like just yesterday. I can't believe it was that more than five years ago."

"Is that fact?"


"That is a honest to God fact." The old man rolled his eyes and whistled, then whispered again. "Skinny or critter, damn, she weren't. I was pickin' the bones out of my peck, I winter."

Speck: "There's a lady present and a stranger. We know you don't mean no harm, but watch out, you don't go givin' our community a bad name."

"Well, our community give me one so we're even."

Speck sat down and accepted a tin plate of food. "More fish on this plate than I see in three weeks. Never seen fishin' so poor since the Red. Je. Them fish is just as good as the National god damn Park is. I am." To Whidden he said, "When your people first come here to Lost Man's trout and snook and mullet was so thick right back in here that you could dance on 'em, it was pure astonishment to the heart and eye. In as damned sorry day as today, a man can't hardly get enough to feed his cat."

He held his plate close under his nose so that his eyebrows beaded over his head. "Especially people like us, you know. Local people don't eat sharks or manatee, and even if 'em will eat a turtle. Went out catch neither, eat 'em neither, and. But over to Key West and the Bahamas, them people will eat con-



Inside
every town
is a secret
city
of desire

ALMA

BY JAYNE ANNE PHILLIPS

AT NIGHT THEY SHUT THE DOOR of my room. The shade of the one window was drawn, and the only light I saw was the light along the bottom of the door. It was the light of their world, a razor-thin sliver hovering in space, somewhere between yellow and white. Lying in my narrow bed, I said my name over and over, slower and faster and faster and slower. I was eleven years old: I thought my name was a code for what happened when I said the word

that was me: a code for the way my breathing changed, for how the space of the room got big, bigger than the house or the town, quiet and full of crashing. Light flickered behind the closed lids of my eyes. Sudden red flashes erupted like visual sirens and disappeared, sucked deeper into the sound of flying and the lonely, vast whirl of darkness. A lot of inner space sang with a roar of wind. I could fling myself deeper, endlessly, and all the time my name sounded in the whisper of my voice.

I thought that's what night was for everyone: that my mother, Audrey, my father, Wes, my sister, Lenny, all tumbled into themselves, falling asleep as they fell. I imagined my parents in the r double bed, lying prone and silent, their heads in the exact centers of their pillows.

And Lenny, my idol, my tormentor, was her night self in my vision: a self washed free of us. I was mesmerized if I watched her as she slept, walked into her room at night after drinking in forbidden fashion from the bathroom faucet. She was fourteen. I remember standing in the dark, looking at her, the delicious metallic taste of tap water still sharp in my mouth. Lenny looked cold but comfortably so, as though she were meant to be cold like marble or crystal. She slept like a nun, fearless and still, on her back, her hands at her sides, her head gently inclined to one side. Her face, expressionless, perfect and smooth, seemed a face unconcerned with possibilities, a face waiting to be alive. Her long, loose hair was the color of bleached hay, hay that has weathered in the fields. All day her hair was bound in a long blond swatch, a silky blunt-cut ponytail that swang when she moved. Wes, who'd learned to barber in the Army, trimmed it once a month. Lenny in the kitchen or the yard, stalwart in her straight chair, Wes with his sharp scissors and rattan comb. My mother put newspapers under them in winter to catch the hair, but in summer the pale wisps fell into the grass and took flight on any gust of breeze. Those nights in my room, in the black fields of my vision, I imagined Lenny and our father taking and spinning through space. Lenny seated, our father's hands in her hair. He was separate from us, a bordering country whose customs and language were mysterious, yet he was part of Lenny. Now that I'm grown, I realize they had quiet, definite rituals, unspoken, barely noticed. Aligned with him, she could not have been as alone as I was, bearing up under Audrey's plaintive secrets, constantly told the truth.

Lenny was told nothing. She learned to understand things in a different way. Maybe Wes taught her it wasn't necessary to name, label, categorize, compile histories, argue with herself until she knew what she wanted. Our mother had to tell herself stories, recite two or three versions of an event, see where things fit. Always, she was outside what happened, alone, talking to include herself in the picture. Someone had to hear her and believe her. Audrey compiled evidence, stories to support her conclusions, and I was the jury she convinced.

I never knew your dad was an alcoholic until after I married him. The man is a secret still, but he's an alcoholic as surely as Mina Campbell is. That family has been through hell. I know all about it from hearing Nickel talk and hearing women gab. Years ago now, your friend Delia was only three or four. Mina's still mad, but they all walk on eggs. Your dad, he just goes out and drinks and is gone, and I get a phone call from Kentucky or that time some sheriff called and he was in lockup at Wildwood Beach, in New Jersey. He won't ever say what happens. I think it's because he doesn't remember. It's all secrets from him as well. And I never knew why he goes off. It never seems to have anything to do with me. It's all him, his whole life's him. I'm just a bystander.

IF HE WAS AWAY, Audrey carried on as though nothing were different, listening for a phone call. Always, the lines of the rooms glowed with the heat of her disappointment. My mother had wanted so desperately to do well, and she had ended up with Wes, an outsider to whom nothing was relative. He compared himself to no one and he worked alone, a salesman of mining equipment. When times were bad and the mines laid off or shut down, he roamed farther and farther to sell machines, the backseat of the car stacked with thick manuals. He drove to Kentucky or the Carolinas, maybe north to Maryland, often on tips from Henry Briarley, who was his friend and cohort. He must have sold machines on the basis of similar friendships with other men, on the basis of his independence. My mother knew he was friendly with powerful men, men who passed for rich in our sphere. She envisioned being entertained in their homes, living as they lived. The fact that Lenny was friends with Cap Briarley, the daughter of the town Midas, was a further tease. Audrey could never understand why Mrs. Briarley failed to recognize her at school functions, met her attempts at conversation with a withering blankness. She couldn't think of Lenny and Cap as motherless daughters, daughters admiring of their fathers, independent, detached, open to anything, capable of disappearing. Audrey cooked Lenny's food, washed her clothes, yammered at her about chores, loved her, I suppose, but she was never in Lenny's mind. Lenny was elsewhere. She had a flat, pared-down light in her blue eyes. She wasn't eager, hungry, desirous, she couldn't be enlisted in Audrey's struggle to survive in isolation. On my mother wanted so much. Even before she conspired to be loved by someone else, Wes was lost to her. She might have been happy with a salesman, a man whose nature it was to cajole and charm. Wes was the antithesis of his own profession. He wasn't ingratiating, he didn't try to please, he wasn't cheerful or optimistic. He had a solid, masculine presence and an outlaw dignity. "What does he have to feel so proud about?" my mother would muse. Men trusted him.

I wonder what Nickel Campbell knew of my father. They were acquainted, Nickel, was Henry Briarley's day foreman and

manager at Cansco Coal, where my father dropped in two or three times a week. Nickel sat in the outer office behind a battered mahogany desk. The desk was bigger and finer than Henry's, and I remember my father joking about it with Nickel on our back porch. My mother gave a barbecue for Wess's birthday; it may be an indication of his lack of interest that Henry and I were allowed to invite the guests. Predictably, she invited couples whose parents deemed to attend, and I missed Nick, whose parents did. Mina Campbell sat nursing Johnny, who was just a baby then, a year before Nickel died. It was June and the corn was in the fields, young pale green stalks, and the wild fields were not tilled yet with milkweed and pokeberries and their bitter pronged stems. The sun was setting slowly and an afterglow was in the grass. Must have been Sunday, no sound of cars going by on the road past the house. There were crickets (they meek, intermittent alarms sounding out like little cries of surprise and farther off the

NO MATTER WHETHER JAYNE ANNE PHILLIPS was at home in the West Virginia or hitting the highway as a young woman on one of her countless road trips, she always felt "like a stranger in a land." "I was a witness, at least," says the author of *Black Tickets* and *Marjorie's Dream*. "That's what felt most honest to me." The same can be said of the eleven-year-old girl, part of "America" who studies with innocence and detestation the secret nationalisms of a flat world. "Although the story is not at all about the life of a P. O. Box," its aura—the bus station, the two-acre garage, the bridge, the sense of the town—how everything is known there or a secret life—that's a different story.

panicked warble of a cackle. I was sitting by Della, my hair in her hair, whispering, we spent years in that posture or its reverse, trained on each other like homing devices. Deliberately, unaware of adults except when we needed their services or when they interrupted and demanded our attention. I remember the smell of Della's hair - like cold vanilla and the muted, scented, starchy scents on the side of her face from chicken pox. I always thought they were pretty. I was seeing them hearing laughter, indistinguishable from my own when I became aware of my mother's voice, of the two men warily conversing at the other end of the table. It was a picnic table, unpainted and rickety, like the ones used in roadside parks in the Fifties. Becker Campbell sat at the end of the bench, his hands spread on the wood beside his legs as though for balance. He wore a gold signet ring on the smallest finger of his right hand. Girls in a special club might wear such rings in Gaither to represent a secret. It resembled in design the plastic jewelry we collected from bubble gum machines.

Where'd Henry get that damn desk he's got you set up on. Looks like something his wife's folks might have pressed on him.

Oh, it's not Henry's. My desk had to go to school. My parents sent it turned up on our porch one day in a big crate. Mom wouldn't have it in the house so I moved it to the porch. She doesn't get on with my family.

My father laughed. 'You mean you had an desk as a kid? Must have been bigger than you were.'

It was, nearly. Nickel Campbell nodded.
"Schools provide desks around here. Where'd you go to school?"

Place up in Connecticut I loved them prona much. But
 desk clothes I told Minnie she is lucky they don't send the new
 "Or Henry is lucky."

But Harry's law is luck. Luck is Harry's stick in the mud.
He smiled very self-my serenity and named it Delhi and
no. He received my arm. Are you lucky. Am I?"

"We're lucky together. Del" answered but her voice didn't reassure me. Her father had never really looked at me before, never seen me. He'd seemed part of the atmosphere of Del's house always going to work, wedding and graduation photographs starting from the motel in his absence. On my occasional overnight visits he sat reading by a window that looked out on the red tracks and the overgrown hawthorn hedge of Freshwater in the village. The dining room was in a dark back hallway. Books were always stored in stacks by his chair as though he were studying for a test. He sat reading me Del and I sat in the dining room where no one dined, where the faded dining room table supported plates of Mum's rash, crowded spiced pants. A Motoree television sat under the *First Light* in a corner, built taller in

the kitchen. The baby Johnny not
walking yet, was through the nar-
row doorway, sat on the floor, and
was held to the porcelain edge of
the bathtub as I could not re-
member, but Niece Campbell had
ever spoken directly to me. When
my own summer porch I felt the fa-
lter, this recognition, questioning
proposed, not dictated by the act of
my childhood. He was, equally glad
on the line. And I saw that his right
pupil was crossed by a dark slash.

My dad has "cat's eye" No. 3
and a very beautiful one

When the women returned from the kitchen in a state of haste and conversation, looking very high beak and sand, they wrote their hands full of letters piled with cups, saucers, dessert plates, the cake long and reverend like a crown on a pillow. Lenny was carrying the baby, and a cup brought the presents, peering from behind boxes wrapped in mud-stained celebratory papers. Her quiet and watchful face was again a neutral impulse, turned to mine. The candles were on the wall, and a hymn began to sing.

I see her swimming around the lake and there's a shadow beside Nick's campfire. Not a shadow of his shape as in the chords poem we all memorized in school but a solid, a stable working body, bare in the summer heat as though he's already melting toward mid-afternoon even though the evening has not worn. At White Bridge in gathering dusk, and the police dragged the river to find him. My mother wasn't with him, she would never have been in the car with him, they would never have taken that kind of chance. My mother and Nick's Campbell took plenty of curves ignored a mine of shadows led into a darkness from which she emerged none or not quite gone. I was with her

THE MENSA SATURDAY the week after my father's birthday, but each in the nearly deserted Windward bus station. The station was just a block from Sanders department store where Audrey took us to buy serious clothes. Later, during numerous fifteen minute car rides along Route 1, Windward skirted detours so many images and sounds so much story and puzzle. But in the first time I can't know how or when they'd planned it or why we were going. Sanders to buy in a spring coat store. People from the town were and another Western Bellington shipped across one in Windward. The city's six thousand or so city with bargains too enough to house elevators, a city

with a real department store. We always dressed in our church clothes and good shoes to go there, and we met after shopping in the lobby of the Stonewall Jackson Hotel. Lenny and I would ride the elevators up and down, stepping out on various floors to look at the different wallpaper, the empty corridors, views of the city from the narrow corner windows of the hotel. The rooftops were black and deserted, each fitted with a windowless shack. With their waist-high walls, the roofs seemed the abandoned, tar-papered fields of another, more secretive city.

But now my mother bypassed the hotel and wide main boulevard of Winfield and pulled into the bus station parking lot. Atop the squat brick building there stood a faded representation of a greyhound, a sign nearly as long as the buses parked behind the station. It was meant to be the classic image, sleek and anonymous, but it was hand painted, transformed, made clumsy and real. The dog had an expression at once cartoonish and melancholy, and its form cast a shadow across our car as my mother drove slowly past, casting into a space not fully visible from the street.

"We'll have some lunch here," Audrey said.
 "Here? Why don't we go to the hotel?"
 She regarded me, considering. "I might want to check on a ticket."

Inside the station was dusty and neglected, and a man slept on one of the iron benches in the waiting area. I followed my mother as she walked uncertainly toward the lunch counter, an outpost of booths toward the rear of the building. I'm sure she'd never been to the bus station. Not much came or went through Winfield, big city though it seemed to us, and the bus station was known to host rummies and bums, and the poor too poor to afford trains. Years ago, the station was closed and torn down. But I still hear my mother talking, telling a story that's finished.

I don't know how I was brave enough to be so foolish phoning him at work that Monday May 14. I was just desperate not willing to go along nursing some little hope. I told him that was Audrey Svensson please not to say anything until I was finished that I knew he went to Winfield to do banking for Consol every Saturday. I wanted to meet him there this week at noon at the bus station. I wanted to talk to him more than anything in the world, please if he would just not ask questions and agree. He didn't hesitate just answered like he'd been waiting for my call. Yes, I'll see you then. He said nothing for a moment. I said nothing, but maybe I sighed tense relieved some anguished sound I couldn't stifle and he said so calmly. It's all right. Maybe you don't know what feeling is comfort gratitude until you've reached a certain point then you'll tear at your soul for it.

He was sitting at a table by the wall a wall maybe the height of a man's shoulder and beyond it we could see a cafeteria counter with a steam table. She walked right up to him holding my hand. To his credit he feigned no surprise and gestured to indicate we should sit with him. The chairs were metal the seats covered with the same yellow vinyl as our kitchen chairs at home. For a moment I was deeply embarrassed that we owned and used objects similar to those in a bus station but I realized he wouldn't remember the difference had been outside. I felt my mother's gloved hand at the back of my neck.

"A ma," she said to me - you must be hungry. You go ahead and get a tray, and I'll pay for your food when I come."

I walked away from them around the partition of the title wall. People seemed to have appeared from nowhere, maybe a bus had pulled in and there was a line of five or six customers, one dragging a toddler. I moved along the wall behind them, and realized I could hear Nickel Campbell's voice.

They were sitting just opposite. The wall was tall enough to obscure the top of my head.

"What possessed you to bring Alma?" he said.
"I had to, really. What other excuse do I have to drive to

Winfield on a Saturday or any other day?" Her voice faltered
"You mustn't worry. She'll keep it all to herself."

"Yes, but—she's unusual. I can trust her. I know it. And believe me, there's no other way. I'll schedule lessons for her here maybe, dance or something—

"Audrey . . . he said, in his w/e, sad voice, and I moved along the wall, staring at my feet. I moved because the woman behind me was starting to edge past, and my mother was right, I was starved."

SO IT BEGAN. I don't know if my mother actually inquired about Saturday lessons in Winfield, but she invented classes in baton. I already knew how to twirl, though I was clumsy, and I had wanted a baton for some time. My mother announced that evening at the supper table that I would be taking baton on Saturday afternoons in Winfield.

Lenny looked up from her plate with interest. "You mean you want to be a majorette in high school?"

"Maybe." I shrugged. Even then, I had a feeling the lessons weren't real. Touching the lace of the tablecloth, touching the nearly black wood of the walnut table through cutouts in the lace flowers, I remembered Audrey's voice: *To be afraid of real lace is just synthetic. I won't hold a stain.* And she'd shaken out a broad panel of white trowel, a froth that settled and was flat and thin.

Alma doesn't have to be a majorette. Audrey said "I mean unless she wants to. Baton is just good exercise, good for coordination and confidence, like dance."

"Hmmm," Lenny responded. "A little coordination wouldn't hurt." She smiled a slow, close-mouthed smile, a mannerism I knew she'd learned from Cap Briarley.

"That's not your smile," I said immediately.
"What do you mean?" She wanted, staring, as though trying to make sense of gibberish.

You don't smile that way Cap does. You're always trying to look like her, and she's always trying to look like you. But you don't look like each other, you just look like nobody real. It's horrible. I'm so sick of it."

"You are nuts," Lenny replied evenly, but she didn't look angry or very interested, considering, as though I'd hit on something the two of them might refine.

My father broke in: "How much are these lessons going to cost? And why can't she wait until junior high and take lessons for free in the school band?"

"Well," Audrey said, hesitating a beat as though she didn't want to imply I'd be no one's first choice as a twirler, "the girls have to try out to take baton in hand, and most of them would already have had classes. My mother sent me a check for Alma's birthday, so she could take music lessons of some kind, but baton is cheaper than renting an instrument. I'm not saying she has to become a midgette, or make it her life's work, I just thought it would be nice if she had an interest."

"Alma" Wes gave me a sardonic, amused look, a mark of affection I highly prized, though it was usually offered in collusion against my mother. "Alma, do you need an interest? And it seems to me that if your grandmother wanted to send you money she might have sent it to you instead of to your mother."

Audrey stood up and began clearing plates. "You don't need to worry. I won't ask you to drive her. I'll take her. It'll be fun, something for the two of us." Thus she said for my benefit to indicate once again that I was her special one—the one who cared for her, the one for whom she cared. She made such statements in a tone that paid homage and registered complaint, but Lenny

and Wes didn't seem to hear. Her feelings were a consistent atmosphere, an expected weather that inspired no comment or reply. I was always afraid she'd leave, though I never acknowledged my fears, even to myself. Sometimes I still have the same scary dream that evolved in my mind during those years: that I'm walking through the house of my childhood, a Fifties-style ranch house with parquet floors and a long hallway, wandering from my parents' bedroom in the back, past the bathroom and Lenny's closed door, turning the corner near my own small room, desperately trying to keep my footing because the floor is moving and the walls are not stationary. I move out toward the dining room, which opens into the living room, a large space, it seemed to me then. The blue couch and chair, the white fiberglass drapes, the braided rug on the floor waver as though seen underwater. I make my way to the narrow kitchen, where I nearly always find my mother, but the room is empty, the counters wiped clean, the doors of the cabinets shut, the dishrag wrung out and dried stiff over the long neck of the spigot. The sink is clean, and the metal stopper is in place, washed and dried, free of the garbage she's constantly cleaning from our dirty plates. It's as though she's been released, she's gone, I've lost her.

"Mama?"

"Yes, honey."

"Am I going to get a baton?"

"Of course you are. We'll just park at the lot near the hotel and then we'll go to Craigie's."

"You mean the store that sells instruments?"

"They sell batons, too, and instruction booklets. I already phoned to be sure."

We were driving along the road to Winfield, a gentle two-lane that curved past the little towns of Peetree and Quiet Dell ("wide spots in the road," Audrey called them) and a few farms with big, prosperous barns. Many more were scroungy and poor, the houses sagging, a dog or two chained in the yard. Later, when the interstate was built, none of them showed anymore, not the houses or the way people really lived. The new road was only for passing through, so outsiders could cross the state faster and admire the seemingly empty hills, rolling and dotted with stands of maples and oaks. That day, just less than a year before Nickel Campbell died, the trees were heavy-leaved, their foliage motionless in the heat. My mother and I kept the car windows rolled down and were assaulted by hot air redolent with the smells of hay and soil. She wore a scarf to keep her hair from blowing, and a black dress with a wide white organdy collar, the one Lenny said made her look like a Pilgrim.

That day she wouldn't have said some of the words I remember now. She must have said them later and surely more than once, because I know exact phrases and the inflections of her voice.

It was such a day, that first day. The air was rushing into the car but beyond that roar everything seemed hushed, hot, and still. It seems terrible that I told you so much, but is it always terrible to tell a child the truth? When I married at twenty, I believed all the fairy tales, and they didn't get me very far. I knew Lenny would hold herself apart, like Wes always did, they were born that way, like animals with protective coloring. You were so like me and I didn't ever want you to fade away and then have such trouble coming back from the dead, have to deceive and turn yourself inside out. Being with him was the worst wrong I ever did but it felt the most like being. I still believe things he said. I don't have any shame in my mind about that time, just a still white calm like a snowfall over all the pictures and the words.

I was wearing anklets and Mary Janes and a shirtwaist dress of that color we call aqua, a minty blue with cold in it. My mother's short white gloves were folded in her lap. We always put our best foot forward in Winfield, as though we represented our town

or our lives in a subtle contest. The day felt like a normal shopping trip, except the light coming in the windshield was whiter and too hot, like we were driving right into the sun. I squinted staring straight ahead.

"Alma," my mother said quietly, "I'm sorry there aren't any lessons I'll practice with you if you want at home."

"Are we going to have coffee at the bus station again?"

"Well, no. I thought we'd go to Craigie's and then I'll walk you over to Souders, and you can just stay there and shop by yourself. Don't go anywhere else, now. I'll meet you by the big front door just as you go in, right at the stroke of three. All right?"

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to the bus station to talk to Nickel Campbell."

"What about?"

She shook her head and sighed. "I don't know, I don't know what to say to him. Listen, look in my purse and take five dollars. If you get hungry you can get a sandwich at the lunch counter. You remember where it is."

"In the basement?"

She continued looking ahead into the road. "Oh, I have a notion to go with you, and order a club sandwich, and stash our shopping bags back against the wall like always."

THAT FIRST SATURDAY I drifted through the oversize revolving door of Souders and proceeded along the main aisle of the first floor, anonymous among the cosmetics counters, the mirrored displays of bottles, tubes, hair clasps. I carried the new baton in a plastic bag with a fancy handle and wished it had come in a case with a clasp. I wanted to assemble it, break it down, like a clarinet or a gun. In the hosiery department a succession of disembodied plastic legs were sheathed in different tones of smoke, cinnamon, beige. Far above their upturned ankles the ornamental tin ceilings of the old building hinted at an opulence of fifty years before, but now no one looked up, fluorescent lights hung down at a more reasonable height, and the wide marble stairs were never crowded. Everyone squeezed into the elevator in a profusion of boxes and perfumes. The cage moved, lurched to a stop, and the operator called out the floors. She was the color of oiled walnut, her voice a hoarse baritone. She was thin, small as though she held herself in from long habit, as though it was part of the job to take up as little room as possible. Half sitting, half leaning against a tall metal stool, she stood sentinel before a brass lever. Numerals lit up in neat glass buttons. With her left hand she drove the cage along its vertical route, B through 5. With her right she opened and shut the folding metal gate, arching it so the modern pneumatic doors on each floor could function with clean, short sighs. The metal gate rattled and resembled a wildly exaggerated piece of jewelry or a torture device. Through its lattice of steel triangles I watched our passage through the shaft itself and thought of tunnels, mining a dark netherworld. Women habitually watched the illuminated strip above the gate, but it wasn't necessary to check our position. The operator stopped at every floor unless the elevator was packed full. She was the only one who spoke. Her passengers murmured directives and thanks but never conversed. Ongoing exchanges stopped as though by mutual consent, and women snapped their purses shut with authoritative clicks. Whole families stood nearly silent, all but the youngest children, who quieted. The small, obvious ones continued to jabber and sing, their voices whole and pure in the enclosure large beyond their own expectations. Their breathy talk permeated our ascending cage. Listening, I heard their words and phrases as the lost receding language of a home now far from me, and I understood that I was no longer a child.

BASCOMBE, IN REALTY

The
thrills of
playing
house

BY RICHARD FORD

IN HADDAM, SUMMER FLOATS OVER tree-softened streets like a sweet lotion balm from a careless, languorous god, and the world falls in tune with its own mysterious anthems. ♣ Outside on peaceful Jefferson Street I hear the footfalls of a jogger slipping down the hill toward Taft Lane and the Choir College to run a ways in the damp grass. I hear a car door close across the street and the soft voice of Skip McPherson, returning from his summer hockey league in East

Windsor. A street away someone begins to noisily driveway-bark-squeak-breathing-a-coughing-sigh. And far out on the main line the breeze is right to hear the Amtrak harte past for Philly—the Merchants Special.

Elsewhere the morning marriage enrichment class has let out at the high school. Its members, sleepy-eyed and dazed bound for bed again, in our Negro tract, men sit on scoops, pant legs rolled above their sock tops, sipping cool coffee in the growing, easeful heat. And along on the breeze a sea salt smell floats from miles and miles, mingling shadowy mid-ocean aromas with the last of the summer's stewart moccasins, while the varsity band begins its drills, two a day, on the cropped gridiron, revving up for the midsummer classic. Boom-ta-ta boom-ta-ta boom-boom-boom Haddam Haddam Up nnnnnn-tem Ba-boom.

Though all is not exactly kosher here—in spite of a good beginning (when's anything exactly kosher?), I myself was mugged a street over, in late May, legging it back from the realty office on Carnegie Street just before dark, a host of facts and figures in my head. Three young boys, one of whom I might've seen before but couldn't name, came careening down the sidewalk on minibikes and conked me in the head with a Pepsi bottle, then rode off howling. Later, the Zambros house, two doors down, was barged twice in the same week (they missed something the first time and came back to get it). And then, to all our dismay, a realtor from our office, Clair Devane, our black agent, was murdered in a condo she was showing in the country lanes, not beyond Penn's Neck, roped and tied, raped and stabbed. No good clues, not a pink white frock were out—left lying on the floor, saying in her own hand, "Luther Family just started looking. M.D. 5:00 p.m. 3 P.M. Get key. Dinner with Eddie. Eddie's his boyfriend."

And all around our summer swam, notwithstanding there's a feeling of a world world being just beyond our perimeter, a new and untold feeling among our residents, one they'll never adjust to—or that's my guess—one they'll die before accommodating. A sad fact about adults is that you can see the very things you'll never adapt to coming up on the horizon. You see them as the problems they are, you worry like hell about them, you tell yourself you'll have to change your way of doing things. Only then you don't. You can't. Somehow it's too late. And maybe it's worse than even that. Maybe the thing you see coming is not even the real thing, the thing that scares you, but is a termith.

Haddam does not seem like a town in the throes of a price decline. It looks, in fact, pretty prosperous, uppity and sanguine-minded about its various expectations and agendas. The housing stock has plenty of big nineteenth-century Second Empires and bracketed villas, mostly owned by high-priced lawyers and salt-ware CEOs, with cupolas and helvedores and oriel to spice up the basic lingua franca, which is Greek with Federalist details, elements, and postrevolutionary stone houses with fan lights,

ornamented entries, and Roman flutings. A-hese houses, both in the village and out into the surrounding woods, were big ticket items the day the last door was hung, a hundred and fifty years ago, and hardly ever come on the market, except in extreme, various divorce proceedings in which one or another spouse wants a for-sake-sign-stick in front of a former love nest to get under the skin of the party of the second part. Even the few "village in" over-grown houses have now become high-dollar and are mostly all owned by rich widows, privacy-hungry gay husbands, and well-heeled M.D.s from Philadelphia who keep them as country places to hie off to with their receptionists during the color season.

But looks can be deceiving. Property values are decided v-down, though asking prices have yet to reflect it, and houses aren't moving in the prime selling season between March 1 and the first of October—now, in other words, Banks are ratchetting up on the price of money, and coming back to us realtors with probablenews about a ppruss's Sellers who "I made retirement plans for Lake of the Ozarks" for a smaller house scaled down to practical needs now that the kids are finished at UVA are retrenching and taking a wait-see attitude toward the next expected upswing, finding Haddam a better place to live than they've been thinking when they thought their house was worth a fortune.

For the first time since I moved here in 1961, there are two businesses on Bank Street, that have left their stores standing empty, the management getting out of town under cover of darkness, leaving a lot of people money and merchandise, one has relocated to the Monwah Mall, the other hasn't been heard from. In the early eighties, when things were clicking and whirring and I was still writing for a sports magazine, all our weekenders were savvy New Yorkers, rich SoHo residents, and we heeded East Siders down to "the country," or the day. Now all those people are either staying at home in their cement and barred enclosures and getting into urban pioneering, or whatever their checkbooks allow for a weekend splurge, or else they've sold out and gone back to Kansas, or decided to forgo a new start in the Twinkies, where life's slower and cheaper. Plenty I'm sure, are to stay and bored silly wherever they are, wishing someone would try to rob them.

Yet like most people I am optimistic about the foreseeable future, though cautious in most ways the boom of the Eighties has paid off no matter what things feel like at the moment. So that my own concerns with the long run, something that progress American style doesn't take much of an interest in. And maybe it's just a factor of my own that I voted stage of life, or myself again, on again sense of urgency, or my anxiety about physical disappearance (when you're forty-five your queue mid-life crises are all back in the road, someplace). It's true that at forty-five you commence to act in the grinding state of your age. It becomes a function of damn near everything now your colon works the meters of usefulness left in your choppers, your perform-

BASCOMBE, IN REALTY BY RICHARD FORD

ance on the treadmill and in bed. For everything you do reasonably well, there's somebody wearing a white cotton smock with a blue and white name tag on the front, to comment, "that is, at your age." Your toes look just fine to me. Mr. Bascombe, for a man your age." Or "For a man your age the amount of slag built up in your abdominal aortic artery is nothing, I'd even worry about you'll be dead from something else before your heart gives out."

Nothing good is really good, in other words, when you're forty-five. It's not bad enough to drive you to a twelve-step program or to run your car off Bryce Canyon or to miss a curve on Mulholland Drive, or into a Catholic Church or an ashram. But it's a truth, there in your life like a great winged bird of uncertain temper, maybe vicious, maybe good, maybe kind, that keeps flying over you and over you, casting its shadow on your person. For some human situations there's no twelve-step program.

It's true, of course, that I feel the same way I felt when I was twenty-five. Everything still works okay. (I wear glasses to read, have a little arthritis in my fingers from my years as a sports reporter, my hair's not all where it once was.) But I am still able to feel "purely pleased" as when I am taking the train through some reagan industrial wasteland in mid-October and chance to see a window stranded lone as a sentinal amid canals and tracks and rusted car carcasses, a tree full of autumn fires burning with some mysterious bright light, and feel, for a flashing moment, just good about it. Nothing epic or religious, nothing lasting just good. That trick's still mine. It is when I lose that ability, if that's what it is, that I'll think about life in a different light. A less bright one, when the shadow doesn't move, but stays.

Though strictly speaking about my town—Haddam—I am bemused, and find myself missing it, missing the very town I live in, even as I go on living in it. Some odd, evasive quality it has now, it didn't have the year Ann and I showed up here as sturdy young marrieds from NYC, our firstborn not yet born, some new quality related to newcomers to refurbished land marks, a new post office, new pavement, smoother sidewalks, a function of the "boom" and the postcoital taste of after-boom life's slow resumption.

And practically speaking, it must mean something to a town to the local spirit for its value on the open market to signify less. If some otherwise healthy charcoal briquette company's stock takes a nose dive, the company responds ASAP. Its "people" stay at their desks an extra hour, unless they're fired outright; men go home a lot more dog-tired and carrying no flowers, citizens stand staring up at the tree limbs in need of trimming a little longer in the hazy evening hours, opt for an extra Pimm's before the next candlelight dinner alone with the wife, wake oddy at 4 A.M. with nothing much in mind, just restless.

I likewise in Haddam, where falling property values ride like an odorless, colorless mist through the trees, and all breathe it in, all sense it. Though, because no one's truly responsible for anybody else, because a town's not to blame for having done all it can but less than enough, because your next-door neighbor is new and seems too young and not too social, because of all these "conditions" and more—the signs are subtle and largely withheld. Worried words get passed at breakfast, not at dinner when there'd be time for a real discussion or a fight, the feeling of what's any hour really worth lingers as you bend to adjust the

sweep of the sprinkler, the anxiety of setting stays with you like a worrisome EKG, though you've never thought of selling, never once—meant this house to be the last you owned, the one you're burned out of, the one the town might eventually put a plaque on to commemorate your having lived there.

Private y. I have begun wondering, and not in an alarmist or a gloomy, fugueish way, but more in an archaeological spirit, is if in the practice of realty I were each day at the job of unearthing the ongoing site and mysterious petroglyphs of my time, fitting pieces together, deciphering partial inscriptions, discovering how the whole site is shaped and lies upon the horizon, and which way

A MISSISSIPPIAN BY BIRTH, and a traveler by inclination, Richard Ford now resides in New Orleans, in an antebellum house barely a shout from the tourist satyricon of Bourbon Street. He is at work on the sequel to *The Sportswriter*, a novel in progress called *Independence Day*. It is the story of Frank Bascombe, former sportswriter turned bemused and prosperous realtor. Minimal research has been required. "Americans move," Ford says, "to change their luck—that is, if they can—and writers are always trying to sweeten their luck. Living in different houses for such purposes may be one of the few things in which I'm an expert."

It faced, wondering, Where is all this heading? Where will buying a new house get anybody that staying put and having cancer won't get them just as fast? How would I feel, what would I need to learn? How would the view be if I woke up in Haddam, like Rip van Winkle in a hundred years? It's a quest on I often think about while I stuff envelopes with updates. "Price reduced for qualified clients." "Motivated seller." "Act now." And the answer is much like the answer to the question of what happens to us when we die. Either it'll be exactly the same as this (not my guess, or it'll be so different I can't imagine it, in which case I'm not that interested).

THESE DAYS I AM LIVING happily in a hache or's hurt-toned-down way in my ex-wife's house on Jefferson, or I should say, the house formerly owned by a former my wife, Ann Leurtzma Bascombe, now Mrs. Charley O'Dell, 86 Swallow Lane, Deep River, CT, the shetland sweater, shatake mushroom, Swedish food processor, good Brie, and Laura Ashley capital of North America, she has reactivated her maiden name and now is just Ann Leurtzma, formerly of Grosse Pointe Woods. My children live there, too, though I am not so sure how blissful they are or even should be under the circumstances, especially my son, Paul, who is not having an easy time of it now, has been arrested for shoplifting in a mall near O'Dell's house, and is in need of real, fatherly assistance.

I have lived here now for three years, slightly longer than I have been in my new profession of house-selling for the Lauren Schwindell Firm, offices on Carnegie Street across from the Theological Institute, as well as in Ocean Grove, and Hopatcong in the New Jersey lake district. The configuration of life events that led me to this profession and to this very house might seem unusual if your model for human existence is based on a family, professional Kinsey report from the late Forties, or the ideal American family-life profile from some right-wing think tank, one of whose directors actually lives in Haddam and who are usually apologetic for a model, like no one can actually live without resorting to mind-numbing, impulse-suppressing, memory-cotting drugs, they also don't want you to have (though I'm sure they have'em by the tractor-trailer loads). To anyone else, though, my life will

seem more or less normal under the microscope full of oddities and incongruities none of us escapes but which do little harm.

Not long after coming back from an extended trip to Europe during which I came to grips with some of life's abstracter facts and resolved to turn over some bright new leaves, get chammy with my children before it was too late, take trips to Yellowstone and Banff to teach them respect for nature's bounty, drive them to Atlantic City to see Mel Tormé at Trop World—all of which I did not long after a ltr. Ann called up to say she and Charley O'Dell, the architect she'd been having a six-month long "your place or mine" relationship with, were planning marriage. She was she said selling her house and moving ka and kaboodle up to O'Dell's in Deep River where Charley captained his one man design firm housed predictably in a converted seaman's chapel situated on stilts at the marsh edge (tall hygienically clean cinderstones, cantilevered cathedral ceilings, plenty of imported blond wood from Norway and Outer Mongolia, everything built in dovetailed and rabbeted, classical music going day and night *va-ta-ta, va-ta-ta*), all of it just downwind of the Knox, his equally pretentious hand-hewn, post and beam Nantucket Cottage adaptation (fifty more windows, solar panels, heated floor tiles, Finnish sauna, et cetera). Charley, I hardly need say, attended Yale, hails from New Canaan and sails his own twenty-five foot Alerion, built with his own methodical well-caloused fingers using sails he sewed himself at night listening to Sibelius. She hoped I wouldn't be too upset.

I, of course, didn't know what in the hell to think and was for several seconds totally dumb struck, just sat no ding the receiver to my ear as if the line were dead. There was no cause in our divorce decree, she reminded me in the perplexed ticking silence to keep her from hauling the kids out of town—though that was only because nothing so outlandish had ever occurred to me way back when.

My first thought, though, once the words themselves were swallowed, was that I, as well as Paul and Clarissa, had been scaldingly and unfairly betrayed at a critical point in our lives—and just when I was getting things nicely turned around for the long, leisurely canter back to the barn, a little's point of sovereign amelioration, sins forgiven, all lesions healed.

I had met architect Charley, tall rangy tan skinned loose-hipped pseudo-aesthete, given to clean white T-shirts, canvas walking shorts, and expensive deck shoes sans socks on several occasions having to do with the delivery and pickup of children and had officially declared him a "no threat." Though Ann wouldn't agree, wouldn't finally break down on the evenings we stood out by my car in the silent dark of divorced friends who still love each other and dream up cagey, smarmy jokes at O'Dell's expense the way she had with all her other suitors—jokes about the custom seat covers in the cars they drove, or their taste in suits, or the personality of the ex-spouses. Mum was uncomfortably the word where O'Dell was concerned, and I suppose now I should've seen it coming and torpedoed him the way any sane man would.

Though as a result, when she told me on the phone one Friday evening just at cocktail hour, just as the sun had cleared the yardarm all over town and trays of ice cubes were being cracked and tumbled into clean crystal buckets and leaded tumblers and slim pitchers, the vermouth hauled ritual out from the butler's pantry, the smell of juniper rising into the nostrils of many a bushed but doubtful hubby standing musing out onto a mottled summery lawn, wondering if he oughtn't sprinkle one more time where he'd worked the new super sun zoysia seed into the bare spot where the neighbors' dog had dug, or ought he to trust a heavy dew to keep the ground moist till morning when he could sip out before work with the hose

and the fine spray attachment—as a result I was hit amidstships. "Frank," Ann said very firmly. "I'm calling to tell you that I'm getting married."

"Married?" My heart made one possible loud but absolutely palpable clunk deep toward the bottom of my chest. "Who to?"

"To Charley," she said calmly.

"The bricklayer?"

"Right," Ann said. "The bricklayer. The architect."

"Why?" I said.

"Why? Because I want somebody to make love to me more than eight times and then never get to see them again. Because I want a nice house. Because I want the kids to live someplace besides the suburbs. Because I want to get away from here and live where I can see the Connecticut in the morning mist and go sailing in a skiff with my children. In more traditional terminology, I guess I'm in love with him. What do you think?"

"Those seem like good enough reasons," I said.

"I'm happy you agree."

"I don't agree," I said. "I think it's goddamn awful."

"Then I'm sorry you don't agree. But it's not awful."

"What do the children think about it?" I felt my heart thunk a thunk again. This is a serious issue, of course, one in which the father almost never fares well and is usually seen either as a stooge or else as a betrayer who's forced Mom into marrying a hairy outsider. Either way, insult is glommed onto injury.

"They think it's wonderful," Ann said. "Or I guess they will. I think they expect me to be happy, too."

"Sure," I said. "Why not?"

"Why not? Right." And then there was a long and cold silence, a silence we both knew to be the silence of the millennium, the silence of divorce, the silence of love lost where something could've made it not be lost but somehow didn't, the silence of death long before death might even be winked at, the silence of fatigue over love being parceled out the way it had been.

"That's all I really have to say," Ann said crisply. A curtain had been parted and then closed.

I was in fact standing in the butler's pantry, staring out the little round nautically paned window into the yard where the big copper beech cast an ominous predark shadow over the soft green grasses of a midday spring evening. "When's all this happening?" I asked in a hopeful voice, put my hand to my cheek and my cheek was cold.

"In a month, I guess."

"Not wasting any time."

"Why should I? I've done that already." An unmistakable jab at me. I almost said "ouch," but didn't.

"What about the club?" Ann had stayed on as a part-time teaching pro at Cranberry Hills. Once, briefly, she had been an aspirant to the ladies tour. I suspected she had met Charley there, on the caddy with his reciprocating membership.

"It's fine," she said. "I've taught enough women to play golf. I put the house on the market this morning with Lauren Schwandell. I priced it to sell."

"Maybe I'll buy it," I said for no reason but to have something bold and unexpected that was mine to say. All my lines in these terrible moments seemed to be written for me.

"That'd be novel," she said.

"Maybe what I'll do is buy it and sell this place and move in to your house." I of course had no earthly idea why I would say anything so ridiculous. Though as soon as the words left my mouth I had the dead-eyed conviction that I was going to do exactly that, and in a hurry, too—perhaps so she could never get rid of me, not that you ever get rid of anybody ever, and especially somebody you've been married to. That may be, in fact, what

marriage means in a man's terms. It's the institution you share with the one person in the cart you can't get rid of except by dying. (Why, one wonders, would anyone do that?)

"I leave the real estate ideas to you," Ann said, and I knew she wanted to get off the phone. I clearly imagined Frank Lloyd O'Dell, lounging in the couch beside her, leg set up, browsing with his big smug through a *Nation* magazine.

"Is Charley there now?" I said innuently since it was conceivable I would just go over there right then and bust him up. He'd bust up his *Safari World* publisher.

"No, he's not here," Ann said. "And don't you come over here, please. This isn't easy for me. I'm crying, and you don't get to see that." However, I couldn't hear her crying and assumed she was trying to make me feel like a base, which is how I felt, though I hadn't done anything. I was she who was getting married. I who was getting etched in.

"I won't come over there," I said glumly. For a silent moment I watched a small gray bunny hop out from under a big rhododendron. Ann and I had planted together for privacy's sake by the Delleves property line back in '76. And then suddenly while I was holding the phone to my ear, another completely silent silence filled the optical lines connecting Ann and me. And for no reason at all, I had the sharpest pang that Ann was going to die. Not immediately. Not even soon, necessarily. But not so long from then either at the end of a period of time which, because she was leaving town on the arm of another man, would pass by me almost imperceptibly, her life's extinguishment paying out beyond my knowing via a series of small but exquisite nothings, my evenings, my evenings, appointments, dismissals, unhappy lab reports, goomy X-rays, struggles, my victories, reprieves, tag-teamures. Life's small and distracting happenstance, at the sudden, misty conclusion of which, I would come, or a voice mail, or a fax, or a telegram saying "Ann Leutism, died Tuesday. Services today. Thought you'd want to know." Condolences? O'Dell.

After which my own life would be ruined and over with big time. All the marriages, no tomorrow, no coming back for seconds, the whole cake gone. (It is another matter, of my age. I know that all new events seem to threaten to ruin my precious remaining years. Nothing, I feel, but feeling exists when you're thirty-two.)

And it's cheap, of course—a kind of sentimentalism the gods on Olympus brown on, sending down avengers to punish the small time, a moment of emotion. Only sometimes you can't feel anything about a subject without hypothesizing its extinction. Which is how I did feel, full of emotion that Ann was going away now, to start the part of her life she was forty-two that would end in her death. And I would pay no part in it. I would be elsewhere, piddling around, it nothing very important, as I'd been, depending on your point of view, for either three years or twenty. And what I would be, I thought, or thought of only as I was once married to. I'm not sure where he is now. No. He was strange. This, from her sketchbook.

So I was to live a part of my life that I would have had to be spoken now, on the phone, streets, away, a flustered neighbor hoods (the geography = divorce), a cocktail hour she was in her house, me alone in mine, feeling as recently as ten minutes previous pretty good about my untold prospects, then suddenly feeling as divorced as I'm in here.

"Don't marry him, sweetheart. Marry me." Marry me again. Let's sell both our crazy houses and move to Quaddy Head where I'll buy a small newspaper from the proceeds. You can learn to sail a skiff on the Cranberry, and the kids can become, in the time they have left as kids, skeptical little manners, learn to print by hand, become forever with lobster pots, trade their sear accents go to Bowdoin and Bates. These are words I didn't

say into the dense millennial silence. They would've been laughed at and ignored and should've been. Suffice it to say that I wanted to say them and didn't, which a psychologist will tell you means I didn't really want to.

"I understand all of this," is what I said in a convinced voice as I peered myself a convincing amount of gain, bypassing the vermouth. "And I love you by the way."

"Please," Ann said, moved. "Just please. How can that be true? And even if it is, what difference does that make? Anyway, I'm finished with what I had to tell you." Ann is the kind of bedrock literalist who simply doesn't take an interest in the unreasonable and tartered, the things I sometimes tell I'm only interested in and stated for. It's as if she only believes in style facts.

"But sweetheart, to say that some important truths are founded in flimsy evidence isn't to complain about very much," I said rhetorically.

"That's your philosophy, Frank," Ann said coldly. "It just matters to you how long the tartered things hold up, right?"

"Right." I took a sip of not quite glowing cold gin, nothing's better under the circumstances. For some people the tartered can last long enough to become true. For some people, it can't, unfortunately.

"I'm in group two," Ann said. "And if you were about to ask me to marry you instead of Charley, don't. I won't. I don't want to."

"I wasn't," I said. "I was just trying to speak an ephemeral truth and trudge on beyond it."

"Trudge on then," she said. "I've got to cook dinner for the children. I did always think, though, it'd be you who'd get married, is soon as we got divorced. Some himbo."

"Maybe you didn't know me very well."

"Maybe not. Sorry, my friend."

"Thanks for calling me," I said. "Congratulations."

"Sure, it was nothing," Ann said glumly, then she said "goodbye" and hung up.

NOTHING. IT WAS SOMETHING. I bolted back the rest of my gin in one shuddering gulp to wash down a frothing bitterness. Nothing? It was epochal. I didn't actually care if it was blue blood, Charley O'Dell from Yale, New Canaan, or penicillin-necked breast-pocket penholder screw-kase Fred from Bel Luss, or Lonnie from down at High Tide Seaside. I'd have felt the same, like shit.

Ann and I had had a nice system worked out, one by which we lived separate lives in separate houses, in one small tidy and perfect town, we'd had things, woes, despairs, joys, a whole gearbox full of life's messings and unmeshings on and on, but fundamentally we were the same two people, only in different equispaced same points, different orbits, same solar system. In a pinch, a real pinch, say a head-on car crash requiring life support, or a prolonged and maddening bout with corrosive chemo, no one but the other would've been "in attendance," consulting the docs, chatting up the nurses, judiciously closing and opening curtains, monitoring the game shows through the long afternoons, storing away unwanted neighbors and long-ignored relatives, former boyfriends, girlfriends, and nemeses, old roomies, shepherding them all back down the long empty, softly lit corridors, speaking in whispers, saying he/she had "had a good day but was resting now," all this while the other—the patient—dozed and the machines ticked and whirled and sighed, and all just so we could be alone. Eventually, after a long recovery during which one or the other would have to relearn some basic life functions up to now taken for granted, walking, breathing, piss-

ing certain key conversations would've taken place certain door admissions offered or we'd already have been offered in moments of extremis certain truths would've been reconciled so that a new and (this time) truly binding union of spirits could've been forged. Or maybe not. Maybe we would simply have parted again though with new strengths and insights and respects achieved through the fragile life experiences of the other.

All of that was gone like a fart in a skillet. And yet I was still. I'd known Ann would get remarried, knowing it is demonstrated by actually thinking I'd have thought like a Viking instead of giving in to divorce years ago like a queasy uninspired saint. And I'd have thought for a good reason. Because no matter where she heads the mortgage papers she completely supposes my existence. My life was and still is at a stage in which she's continually in its audience, whether she's paying attention or not. All my decent, reasonable, parent-loving components were developed in the proximity of our life together and I realized that by moving house up to Deep River, she was at that moment taking most of those components with her to lavish on a surrogate, leaving me with my worn-out costumes to pay myself with.

I, of course, fell into a substantial funk for the next week. I stayed at home and no one spoke briefly to both my children who seemed to calculate their mother's marriage with the alacrity of seeing a small gain in stock they'd bought too high and realized they would probably lose money on in the long term.

Paul declared Charlie to be an "okay guy" and admitted to having gone to Giants game with him the November before—something I hadn't heard about because I was away in Europe. Charlie had season tickets through some Yachties who were in thick with the team owners, which didn't impress Paul, who'd been in plenty of press boxes when his old man was a sports back.

Clarissa seemed more interested in the wedding than in the concept of a reminiscence. The event itself was to be an intimate but elegant lawn party affair—classy, serious, all taking place at the Knoll. Ann's mother was flying in from Newport Beach (her father, having since passed on to a happier world, and Charlie's parents were moving down from Blue Hill to Northeast Harbor).

"Since I missed you guys wedding, I'll get to see this one," Gary said cheerily on the phone one afternoon. "When you get married I'll come to it too."

"Will you be the best man?" I said, uncheerily.

"I'll be a bridesmaid like who you marry," she said. "Paul has to be the best man."

"When you're up there in Connecticut you'll have to find somebody for me to marry," I said. "Maybe there'll be more girls up there than there are here."

"You don't want a girl, Daddy," Clarissa said very solemn. "You want a woman."

"That's right. I forgot."

"I'm a girl," she said. "You can't marry someone like me. You're weird."

"That's right," I said. "I forgot the details."

"You're weird," she said and laughed loudly.

"I am weird," I said. "I don't know what happened to me when I was younger sweetheart. I just got weird. I'm sorry."

Some quality, some keening spirit in my human voice seemed to bemuse her then, and she began to talk about the dress she was going to wear and where everyone was staying—the Griswold Inn, the Old Saybrook, the groom's party at the Sasse Chalet in Lyme. We talked a minute more, then parted company, never to speak under those same circumstances or in those same voices again. Gone. Po.

But no sooner had Ann solemnized her rethreaded vows with Charlie, the master builder, than I began to plunge for

word with new plans of my own to purchase her house on Jefferson—she was asking \$495,000—and to get loose from my big old suffer-sagging half timber on Hoiving Road, where I'd lived every minute of my life in Haddam, N.J., and where for a few blissful years I mistakenly thought I could live forever.

Ann's house was a crisp, unspoken, freestanding Greek Revival in town of a style typical to our central Jersey area—a place she'd bought on the cheap after our divorce, done some modernizing work on—opening out the back, spanking up the bathrooms and the kitchen, repointing some basement piers, adding skylights and crown moldings for effect—and finishing off the third floor to be Paul's lair, then giving the whole place a new white paint job.

And setting aside the preliminary strangeness of moving in to your ex-wife's ex-house, the place actually seemed like a natural for me, having spent a long collection of sleepless nights there when I'd been sick or when in the early days of our divorce I'd had the jimjams so bad Ann would sometimes feel sorry for me and let me come sleep on the couch.

It felt like home in other words. And I not my home at least my kids' home—someone's home. Whereas our old place had begun to feel hazy and macabrous and queer and myself strangely outdistanced as an owner around in the yard Saturday taking my elves or cranking away diligently on my lawn mower or standing in my driveway hands on hips overseeing from below the patching by two Greek swimmers from Trenton of a new squirrel hole under the roof flashing. Outdistanced meaning I had no business doing it anymore since I wasn't preserving anything for anything, just going through the motions joining life's rough timbers end to end.

So the day Charlie and Ann flew off to St. Barts for a week of what I hoped could possibly be arguments, sad realizations and finally frantic phone calls to be met at Newark and the beginning movements of the annulment walk, I got myself over to Lauren Schwandel and threw my hat in both rings at once—hers to buy mine to sell.

And before the lovebirds had even turned to home (no annulment pending, though I detected a stormy grimace in Ann the moment I talked to her on the phone about my bid) I had made a full-price cash offer on 43 Jefferson and through a realtor's connections arranged an extremely advantageous deal with the Therapeutic Institute to take over my house for the purpose of converting it into a conference center where guests like Bishop Tatu and the Dalai Lama and the head of the Icelandic Federation of Churches could hold private meetings about the fate of the world and so find a honey enough to sit up down after midnight for a snack. The institute was unusually sensitive to my tax situation (my house appraised for at a million two at the peak) and set up a complex innuity that allowed me to donate the house as an outright gift claim the deduction and also receive a special "consultant's" fee in what must've been temporary affairs. The rest was small print.

I simply walked out of my house one bright May morning leaving all my furniture except for books and nostalgic attachments. Drove to Ann's house on Jefferson with all her old new furniture sitting exactly where she'd left it and took up residence. I got to keep my phone number.

And truth to tell, I hardly noticed a difference, so often had I lain awake nights in my old house, or roamed the rooms and halls of hers when we were sleeping, searching, I suppose, for where I fit in or where I'd gone wrong, or how I could breathe air into my ghostly self and become a recognizable if changed figure in their sweet, lost lives. One house is as good as another for this kind of enterprise. The poet was right again: Let the winged fancy roam. Pleasure never is at home. ■

The
last wild
lives

THE WOLF TRAPPER

BY CORMAC MCCARTHY

ON A WINTER'S NIGHT in that first year he woke to hear wolves in the low hills to the west of the house and he knew that they would be coming out onto the plain in the new snow to run the antelope in the moonlight. He pulled his breeches off the footboard of the bed and got his shirt and his blanketlined ducking-coat and got his boots from under the bed and went out to the kitchen and dressed in the dark by the faint warmth of the stove and held the boots to the windowlight to pair them left and right and pulled them on and rose and went to the kitchen door and stepped out and closed the door behind him.

When he passed the barn the horses whimpered softly to him in the cold. The moon creaked under his boots and his breath smoked in the bluish light. An hour later he was unchained in the snow in the dry creekbed where he knew the wolves had been using by their tracks in the sand of the washes, by their tracks in the snow. They were already out on the plain and when he crossed the gravel fan where the creek ran south into the valley he could see where they'd crossed before him. He went forward on knees and elbows with his hands pulled back into his sleeves to keep them out of the snow and when he reached the last of the small dark juniper trees where the broad valley ran under the Animas Peaks he crouched quietly to steady his breath and then raised himself slowly and looked out.

They were running on the plain harrying the antelope and the antelope moved like phantoms in the snow and circled and wheeled and the dry powder blew about them in the cold moonlight and their breath smoked palely in the cold as if they burned with some inner fire and the wolves twisted and turned and leapt in a stance such that they seemed of another world entire. They moved down the valley and turned and moved far out on the plain until they were the smallest of figures in that dim whiteness and then they disappeared.

He was very cold. He waited. It was very still. He could see by his breath how the wind lay and he watched his breath appear and vanish and appear and vanish constantly before him in the cold and he waited a long time. Then he saw them coming. Loping and twisting. Dancing. Turning their noses in the snow. Loping and running and rising by toes in a standing dance and running on again.

There were seven of them and they passed within twenty feet of where he lay. He could see their almond eyes in the moonlight. He could hear their breath. He could feel the presence of their knowing that was electric in the air. They bunched and nuzzled and flicked one another. Then they stopped. They stood with their ears cocked. Some with one forefoot raised to their chest. They were looking at him. He did not breathe. They did not breathe. They stood. Then they turned and quietly trotted on. When he got back to the house Boyd was awake but he didn't tell him where he'd been nor what he'd seen. He never told anybody.

THEY RODE THE IBANEZ PASTURE studying the cows. The cows stood their stance and studied them back, a leggy and brockle-faced lot, part Mexican, some longhorn, every color. At dinner time they came back to the house stringing along a yearling heifer on a rope and they put her up in the pole corral above the barn for their father to look at and went in and washed up. Their father was already seated at the table. Boys, he said.

You all set down, their mother said. She set a platter of fried steaks on the table. A bowl of beans. When they'd said grace she handed the platter to their father and he forked one of the steaks onto his plate and passed it on to Billy.

Pap says there's a wolf on the range, she said.

Billy sat holding the platter, his knife aloft.

A wolf? Boyd said.

His father nodded. She pulled down a pretty good sized veal calf up at the head of Foster Draw.

When? said Billy.

Been a week or more probably. The youngest Over boy tracked her all up through the mountains. She come up out of Mexico. Crossed through the San Luis Pass and come up along the west ern slope of the Animas and sit in along about the head of Taylor's Draw and then dropped down and crossed the valley and come up into the Peonillos. Come all the way up into the snow. There was two inches of snow on the ground where she killed the calf at.

How do you know it was a she? said Boyd.

Well, how do you think he knows? said Billy.

You could see where she had done her business, said his father.

Oh, said Boyd.

What do you aim to do? said Billy.

Well, I reckon we better catch her. Don't you?

Yessir.

If old man Echols was here he'd catch her, said Boyd.

Mr Echols.

If Mr Echols was here he'd catch her.

Yes, he would. But he ain't.

THEY RODE AFTER DINNER the three of them the nine miles to the SK Bar ranch and sat their horses and halloed the house. Mr Sanders' granddaughter looked out and went to get the old man and they all sat on the porch where their father told Mr Sanders about the wolf. Mr Sanders sat with his elbows on his knees and looked hard at the porch floorboards between his boots and nodded and from time to time with his little finger tipped the ash from the end of his cigarette. When their father was done he looked up. His eyes were very blue and very beautiful half hid away in the leathery seams of his face. As if there were something there that the hardness of the country had not been able to touch.

Echols' traps and stuff is set up at the cabin, he said. I don't reckon he'd care for you to use whatever you needed.

He flipped the stub of the cigarette out into the yard and smiled at the two boys and put his hands on his knees and rose.

Let me go get the keys, he said.

The cabin when they opened it was dark and musty and had about it a waxy smell like fresh killed meat. Their father stood in the door a moment and then entered. In the front room was an old sofa, a bed, a desk. They went through the kitchen and then on through to the madroom at the back of the house. There in the dusty light from the one small window on shelves of roughsawn

THE WOLF TRAPPER BY CORMAC MCCARTHY

pine stood a collection of fruit jars and bottles with ground glass stoppers and an apothecary, a small antique wagon, a box edged in red upon which in Echols' neat script were listed contents and dates. In the jars dark liquids. Dried viscera. Liver, gall, kidneys. The inward parts of the beast who dreams of man and has so dreamt in running dreams a hundred thousand years and more. Dreams of that malignant lesser god come pale and naked and alien to slaughter. His can and kill and rout them from their house. The jars stood webbed in dust and the light among them made of the little room with its chemie glass a strange bastionaded, waited to a practice soon to be as exact among the trades of men as the beast to whom it owed its being. Their father took down one of the jars and turned it in his hand and set it back again precisely in its round track of dust. On a lower shelf stood a wooden ammunition box with dovetailed corners and in the box a dozen or so small bottles or vials. Written in red crayon across the top board of the box were the words No. 1 Matrix. Their father held one of the vials to the light and shook it and twisted out the cork and passed the open bottle under his nose.

Good, good, he whispered.

Let me smell it, Boyd said.

No, said his father. He put the vial in his pocket and they went on to search for the traps but they couldn't find them. They looked through the rest of the house and out on the porch and in the smokehouse. They found some old number three longspring coyote traps hanging on the smokehouse wall but those were all the traps they found.

They're here somewhere, said their father.

They began again. After a while Boyd came from the kitchen.

I got 'em, he said.

They were in two wooden crates and the crates had been covered with stovewood. They were greased with something that may have been lard and they were packed in the crates like herrings.

What caused you to look in under there? said his father.

You said they was somewhere.

He spread some old newspapers on the floor of the kitchen and began to lift out the traps. They had the springs turned in to make them more compact and the chains were wrapped around them. He straightened one out. The greased chain rattled woodenly. They squatted there looking at it. It looked enormous.

That thing looks like a bear trap, Billy said.

It's a wolf trap. Number four and a half Newhouse.

He set out eight of them on the floor and wiped the grease from his hands with newspaper. They put the lid back on the crate and piled the stovewood back over the boxes the way Boyd had found them and their father went back out to the madroom and returned with a small wooden box with a wire screen bottom and a paper sack of logwood chips and a packbasket to put the traps in. Then they went out and fastened back the padlock on the front door and untied their horses and mounted up and rode back down to the house.

Mr Sanders came out on the porch but they didn't dismount. Just stay to supper, he said.

We better get back. I thank you.

Well.

I've got eight of the traps.

At night.

We'll see how it goes.

Well, you probably got your work cut out for you. She ain't been in the country long enough to have no regular habits.

Echols said there wasn't none of 'em did any more.

He would know. He's about all wolf blood.

Their father nodded. He turned slightly in the saddle and looked out down country. He looked at the old man again.

You ever smell any of that stuff he bawls with?

Yessir, I have.

Their father nodded. He raised one hand and turned the horse and they rode out into the road.

THE WOLF HAD CROSSED the international boundary line at about the point where it intersected the twentieth minute of the thirty-first parallel and she had crossed the old Navajo road a mile north of the boundary and followed Whitewater Creek west up into the San Luis Mountains and crossed through the gap north to the Animas range and then crossed the Animas Valley and on into the Peonillos as they called it. She carried a fresh wound on her hip where her mate had bitten her a week before somewhere in the mountains of Sonora. He'd bitten her because she would not give him. Standing with one forefoot on the jaws of a steel trap and snarling at her to drive her off where she lay just beyond the reach of the

GIVEN CORMAC MCCARTHY'S REPUTATION as a literary lone wolf who is rarely observed beyond his natural habitat of El Paso, it's fitting that wolves have long been one of his interests—as evidenced here in the opening pages of the next volume of *The Border Trilogy*, a series that includes *All the Pretty Horses*. "I've always read everything I could find about wolves," he says. "I've hung around coyote trappers, whose methods are similar to wolf trappers'. And friends of mine have wolves." That the wolf is virtually extinct in the U.S. somehow reminds McCarthy of this excerpt's independent-minded sixteen-year-old hero: "That sort of boy is likely becoming something of an extinct species himself."

churn. She'd flattened her ears and whined and she would not leave. In the morning they came on horses. She watched from a slope a hundred yards away as he stood up to meet them.

She wandered the eastern slopes of the Sierra de Madera for a week. Her ancestors had hunted camels and primitive war horses on these grounds. She found little to eat. Most of the game was slaughtered out of the country years since. Most of the forest cattle fed the boilers of the stamping mills at the mines. The wolves in this country had been killing cattle for a long time but the ignorance of the animas was a puzzle to them. The cows bellowing and bleeding and stamping through the mountain meadows with their shivering feet and their confusion bawling and floundering through the fences and dragging posts and wires behind. The ranchers said they brutalized the cattle in a way they did not the wild game. As if the cows evoked in them some anger. As if they were flayed by some violent, inhuman, disorder, old ceremonies, old protocols.

She crossed the Bay Spe River and moved north. She was carrying her first litter and she had no way to know the trouble she was in. She was moving out of the country not because the game was gone but because the wolves were and she needed them. When she pulled down the veal calf in the snow at the head of Foster Draw in the Peonillo Mountains of New Mexico

she had been little but carried for two weeks and she was mounted, took and she'd found no trace of wolves if all. She and rested and ate again. She ate till her belly dragged and she did not go back. She would not return to look. She would not cross a road or a rail line in daylight. She would not cross under a wire fence twice in the same place. These were the new protocols she knew that had not existed before. Now they did.

She ranged west into Cochise County in the state of Arizona across the south fork of Skeleton Creek Canyon and west to the head of Starvation Canyon and south to Hog Canyon Springs. Then east again to the high country between a lantern and foster draws. At night she would go down into the Animas Plains and drive the wind into open watching them flow and turn in the dust of their own passage where it rose like smoke off the basin floor watching her precisely indexed articulation of the limbs and the rocking movements of their heads and the slow punching and the slow extension of their running, looking for anything at all among them that would name to her her quarry.

At this season the does were already carrying cubs and as they commonly aborted during term the one east favored so twice she found these pale, unborn still warm and gawking on the ground in shade and near translucent in the dawn like beings miscreated from another world. She ate even their bones where they lay behind and diving in the snow. Before sunrise she was off the plain and she would raise her muzzle where she could on some low promontory or rock overlooking the valley and howl and howl again into that terrible silence. She might have left the country altogether if she had not come upon the scent of a wolf just below the high pass west of Black Point. She stopped as if she'd walked into a wall.

She circled the set for the better part of an hour sorting and marking the varied scents and ordering her sequences in an effort to recon the exact place that had taken place here. When she left she went down through the pass south following the tracks of the horses now thirty-six hours old.

By evening she found all eight of the sets and she was back in the gap of the mountain again where she circled the trap when ang. Then she began to dig. She dug a hole alongside the trap until the casing dirt away to reveal the trap's jaw. She stood looking at it. She dug again. When she left the set the trap was sitting naked on the ground with only a handful of dirt over the waxed paper covering the pan and when the boy and his father rode through the gap the following morning that was what they found.

His father slid down from the horse into the cañon. He carried and surveyed the set while the boy sat watching. He remade the set and rose and shook his head. They rode the rest of the line and when they returned the following morning the first set was uncovered again and so were four more. They took up three of the sets and used the traps to make three sets in the rail.

What's to keep a cow from walkin' in em? the boy said.

Not a thing in the world, said his father.

Three days later they found another coyote. Five days after that of the four sets in the trap had been dug out and the trap returned to a spring.

They rode in the evening down to the Sk Ber and called on Sanders again. They sat in the kitchen and told the old man what had occurred and the old man nodded his head.

Ex has one time told me that tryin to get the best of a wolf is like tryin to get the best of a kid. It ain't that they're smarter. It's just that they got all that much else to think about. I went with him a time or two. He'd put down a trap some place and there wouldn't be the first sign of anything up there and I'd ask him why he was makin' a set there and he'd say he couldn't answer it. Couldn't answer it.

They went up to the cabin and got six more of the traps and took them home and buried them in the logwood chips and waxed them and hung them out to dry.

IT HAD SNOWED IN THE NIGHT in the mountains and the snow in the pass to the west of Black Point was a foot deep. Their father led his horse almost through the snow tracking the wolf and they followed her all morning through the high country until she ran out of snow just above the Cloverdale Creek Road. He got down and stood looking out over the open country where she'd gone and then he remounted and they turned and rode back up to check the sets on the other side of the pass.

She's carryin' pups, he said.

He made four more blind sets in the trail and then they went in. Boy was shivering in the saddle and his lips were blue. His father took him back and beside him and took off his coat and hand carried him.

I'm cold, Boyd said.

I didn't ask you if you were cold. Put it on.

The next day Billy ran the line by himself. One of the sets had been worked in but he saw nothing in the trap save some pieces and scraps of bone. In the night it snowed.

Them traps are under two feet of snow, said his father. What is the use in goin' up there?

I want to see where she's at.

You might see where she's been. I doubt it will tell you where she's goin' to be. You know at the next day.

It's got to tell you somethin'.

His father sat contemplating his coffee cup. At night he said, Don't wear your horse out. You can hurt a horse in the snow. You can hurt a horse in the mountains in the snow.

Yessir.

His mother gave him his lunch at the kitchen door.

You be careful, she said.

Yessir.

You be in by dark.

Yessir.

You try real hard and you won't have any problems.

Yessir.

As he rode Bird out of the barn his father was coming from the house in his shirt sleeves with the rifle and saddle scabbard. He handed them up.

If by any chance at all she should be in a trap you come and get me. Unless her leg's broke. If her leg's broke shoot her. Otherwise she's a waste.

Yessir.

And don't be goin' late worryin' your mama neither.

Yessir. I won't.

He turned the horse and went out through the stockgate and into the road south. The dog had come to the gate and stood looking after him. He rode out a little way on the road and then stopped and dismounted and stripped the scabbard alongside the saddle and levered the breech of the rifle partly open to see that there was sheen in the chamber and then slid the rifle into the scabbard and mounted up and rode on again. Before him the mountains were hanging white in the sun. They looked new, born out of the hand of some improvident god who'd perhaps not even puzzled out a use for them. That kind of new. The red of rode with his heart was dead in his chest and the horse who was also young tossed its head and took a sidestep in the road and set at one hind heel and then they went on.

The snow in the pass was half way to the horse's belly and the horse rode down the drifts in high elegance and swang its smoking muzzle over the white and crystal reefs and looked out down

through the dark mountain woods or cocked its ears at the sudden flight of small winter birds before them. There were no tracks in the pass and there were neither cattle nor tracks of cattle in the upper pasture beyond the pass. It was very cold. A mile south of the pass they crossed a running branch so back in the snow it caused the horse to pause just for any slight movement of the water to see that it was no bottomless crevasse that had split the mountain in the night. A hundred yards farther the track of the wolf entered the trail and went down the mountain before them.

He stood down into the snow and dropped the reins and squatted and thumbed back the brim of his hat. In the floors of the little wolf she'd stooped in the snow at her perfect prints. The broad forefoot. The narrow hind. The sometime dragmark of her dogs or the place where she'd put her nose. He closed his eyes and tried to see her. Her mothers of her kind, wolves and ghost wolves running in the whiteness of the high world as if their counsel had been sought in the devising of it. He rose and walked back to where the horse stood waiting. He looked out across the mountain the way she'd come and then mounted and rode on.

A mile farther she'd left the trail and gone down through the juniper parklands at a run. He dismounted and led the horse by the hind reins. She was making ten feet at a jump. At the edge of the woods she turned and continued along the upper edge of the vegetation. He mounted up again and rode out down the pasture and he rode up and back but he could see no sign of what it was she'd run after. He picked up her track again and followed it across the open country and down along the south-facing slope and on to the bend and above Cloverdale Draw and here she'd routed a small band of cattle scattered up in the junipers and ran them off the bench and crashed and sliding and falling enormously in the snow and here she'd killed a two-year-old heifer at the edge of the trees.

It was lying on its side in the shade of the woods with its eyes glazed over and its tongue out and she had begun to feed on it between its rear legs and caen the liver and dragged the intestines over the snow and eaten several pounds of meat from the inside of the thighs. The heifer was not quite stiff, not quite cold. Where it lay it had melted the snow to the ground in a dark still ouette about it.

He followed her all day. He never saw her. Once he rode her up out of a bed in a windbreak thicket on the south slope where she'd slept in the sun. Or thought he rode her up. He knelt and placed his hand in the pressed grass to see if it was warm and he sat watching to see if any blade or stem of grass would rig it itself but none did and whether the bed was warm from her or from the sun he was in no way sure. He mounted up and rode on. Twice he lost her track in the Cloverdale Creek pasture where the snow had melted and both times picked it up again in the circle he cut or sign. On the far side of the Cloverdale Road he saw smoke and rode down and came upon three vaqueros in the Roman Plaza taking the dinner. They did not know that there was a wolf about. They seemed doubtful. They looked it one another.

They asked him to get down and he did and they gave him a cup of coffee and he took his lunch from his shirt and offered what he had. They were eating beans and tortillas and sucking at some sparelooking goat bones and as there was no fourth plate in any way and vice was any had with any other they passed through a pantomime of offer and refusal and continued to eat as before. They talked of cattle and of the weather and as they were all work scouts for kin in Mexico they asked if his father needed any hands. They said that the tracks he'd followed were probably of a large dog and even though the tracks could be seen less than a quarter mile from where they were eating they showed no inclination to go and examine them. He didn't tell them about the dead heifer.

When they'd gone eating they scraped their plates off into the ashes of the fire and wiped them clean with pieces of tortilla

and ate the tortillas and packed the plates away in their mochilas.

Then they pulled the dagos on their horses and mounted up. He shook out the grounds from the cup and wiped it out with his shirt and handed it up to the rider who'd given it to him.

Adios compadrito, they said. Hasta la vista. They touched their hats and turned their horses and rode out and when they were gone he got his horse and mounted up and took the trail back west the way the wolf had gone.

By evening she was back in the mountains. He followed about leading the horse. He studied places where she had dug but he could not tell what it was she was digging for. He measured the remaining way with his hand at arm's length under the sun and finally he stood up into the saddle and turned the horse up through the wet snow toward the pass and home.

Because it was already dark he rode the horse past the kitchen window and leaned and tipped at the glass without stopping and then went on to the barn. At the dinner table he told them what he had seen. He told them about the heifer dead on the mountain. Where she crossed back going towards Hog Canyon, said his father. Was that all, child?

No sir. It was not much of a track, I'm kind.

Could you make a set in it?

Yessir. I would of had it not been gettin' on late like it was.

Did you pick up any of the sets?

No sir.

You want to go back there tomorrow?

Yessir. I'd like to.

All right. Take a couple of trips and make blind sets with em and I'll run the line with you on Sunday. I don't know how you think the Lord is goin' to bless your efforts and you don't keep the Sabbath, their mother said.

We'll, Mama, we ain't got a ox in the ditch but we sure got some heifers in one.

I think it's a poor example for the boys.

His father sat looking at his cup. He looked at the boy. We'll run it on Monday, he said.

WHEN THEY RAN THE TRAPS on Monday the snow had melted off everywhere save in the north-facing crevices or in the deeper woods below the north slope of the pass. She'd pulled out all the sets save for the ones in the Hog Canyon trail and she had taken to turning the traps over and springing them.

They took the traps up and his father made two new sets with double traps, having one trap under the other and the bottom trap up side down. Then he made blind sets in the perimeter about. He had these two new sets and they returned home and when they ran the traps the next morning there was a coyote dead in the first set. They pulled the set entirely and Billy tied the coyote on behind the cantle of his saddle and they went on. The coyote's bladder leaked down the horse's flank and it smelled peculiar.

What'd the coyote die of? he said.

I don't know, said his father. Sometimes things just die.

The second set was dug out and all five traps sprang. His father sat looking at it a long time.

HE LEFT THE NEXT MORNING on the road to Animas and he was on the road seven hours getting there. He nooned at a spring in a glade of huge old cottonwoods and ate cold steak and biscuits and made a paper boat of the hog his lunch had come in and left it turning and darkening and sinking in the clear still of the spring.

The house was on the plain south of the town and no road to it. There had been a track at one time and you could see where

He ran like the trace of a mud wagon road and that was where he rode to. He came to the cornerpost of the fence. He tied the horse and walked up to the door and knocked and stood looking out over the plains toward the mountains to the west. He turned to rap again but as he did the door opened and a woman stood looking at him. She was eating an apple but she didn't speak. He took off his hat.

Buenas tardes, he said. El señor está?

She bit crisply into the apple with her big white teeth. She looked at him. El señor? she said.

Don Arnaldo.

She looked past him toward the horse tied to the fence post and she looked at him again. She chewed. She watched him with her black eyes.

¿Está? he said.

I'm thinking it over.

What's there to think about? He's either here or he isn't.

All right, she said.

He looked at her.

He's been sick. Maybe he won't say nothing to you.

Well, he will or he won't.

Maybe you take a come back some other time.

I ain't got some other time.

She shrugged. Bueno, she said. Pasale.

She held open the door and he stepped past into the low mudhouse. Gracias, he said.

She gestured with her chin. Atras, she said.

The old man lay in a dark cell of a room at the back of the house. The room smelled of woodsmoke and kerosene and sour bedding. The boy stood in the doorway and tried to make him out. He turned and looked back but the woman had gone on to the kitchen. He stepped down into the room. There was an iron bedstead in the corner. A figure small and dark prone upon it. The room smelled of wool, of dust or clay, as if it might be that the old man smelled it. But then even the floor of the room was mud.

He said the old man's name and the old man shifted in his bedding. Adelante, he wheezed.

He stepped forward, still holding his hat. He passed like an apparition through the banded rhomboid light from the small window in the western wall. The routed dust motes reeled. It was cold in the room and he could see the pale wisps of the old man's breath rise and vanish in the cold. He could see the black eyes in a weathered face where the old man lay on the bare ticking of his pillow. Guero, he said. Habla español?

Si señor.

The old man's hand rose slightly on the bed and he said again. Te dime what you want, he said.

I come to ask you about trappin' wolves.

Wolves.

Yessir.

Wolves, the old man said. He pried.

He was holding up one hand. It hung trembling in the partial light, disembodied, a hand common to all or none. The boy reached and took it. It was cold and hard and hairless. A thing of leather and bone. The old man struggled up.

La almohada, he wheezed. Gracias.

Permita.

Bueno, the old man said. Bueno. He slackened his grip and blew one hand and took off his hat again and held it by the brim. Señate, the young man said.

He sat gingerly on the edge of the chin pad that covered the springs of the bed. The old man did not turn loose of his hand.

What is your name?

Parham. Blay Parham.

The old man said the name in silence to himself. He lay holding the boy's hand and staring up at the kindlingwood lattice of the ceiling.

Mr. Sanders said you might have some scent I could buy off of you. He said I ought to ask.

The old man didn't answer. He closed his eyes and opened them again. He lay against the ticking of the pillow with his neck slightly awry. He looked as if he'd been thrown there. In the fulling light the eyes betrayed nothing. He seemed to be studying the snail was in the room.

I got one bottle that says Number Seven Matrix, the boy said. And another that don't say nothing.

La matriz, the old man said.

He waited for the old man to continue but the old man did not continue. After a while he asked him what was in the matrix but the old man only pursed his thin mouth in doubt. He continued to hold the boy's hand and they sat that way for some time. The boy was about to put some further query to the old man when the old man spoke again. He said that the matrix was not so easily defined. Each hunter must have his own formula. He said that things were rightly named, its attributes which could in no way be counted back into its substance. He said that in his opinion only shewolves in their season were a proper source. The boy said that the wolf of which he spoke was in fact horseflesh and he asked if that fact should figure in his strategies against her but the old man only said that there were no more wolves.

Elavino de Mexico, the boy said.

He seemed not to hear. He said that Echols had caught all the wolves. He coughed quietly and lay still. After a while he spoke again.

Es cazador de lobos, he said. Cazador. Me entiendes?

The boy didn't know if he understood or not. The old man went on to say that the hunter was a different thing than men supposed. He said that men believe the blood of the slain to be of no consequence but that the wolf knows better. He said that the wolf is a being of great order and that it knows what men do not, that there is no order in the world save that which death has put there. Finally he said that if men drink the blood of God yet they do not understand the seriousness of what they do. He said that men wish to be serious but they do not understand how to be so. Between their acts and their ceremonies lies the world and in this world the storms blow and the trees twist in the wind and all the animals that God has made go to and fro yet this world men do not see. They see the acts of their own hands or they see that which they name and call out to one another but the world between is invisible to them.

You want to catch this wolf, the old man said. Maybe you want the skin so you can get some money. Maybe you can buy some boots or something like that. You can do that. But where's the wolf? The wolf is like the copo de nieve.

Snowflake.

Snowflake. You catch the snowflake but when you look in your hand you don't have it no more. Maybe you see this decha do. But before you can see it it is gone. If you want to see it you have to see it on its own ground. If you catch it you lose it. And where it goes there is no coming back from. Not even God can bring it back.

The boy looked down at the thin andropy claws that held his hand. The light from the high window had paled; the sun had set.

Escuchame, joven, the old man wheezed. If you could breathe a breath so strong you could blow out the wolf. Like you blow out the copo de nieve you blow out the fire from the candle. The wolf is made the way the world is made. You cannot touch the world. You cannot hold it in your hand for it is made of breath only.

The old man lay quietly in the dark. The boy waited. Joven, he said. Yo no se nada. Esto es a verdad. Está bien.

The matriz was not help you, the old man said. He said that the boy should find that place where acts of God and those of man are of a piece. Where they cannot be distinguished.

Y que clase de lugar es éste, the boy said.

Lugares donde el hierro ya está en la tierra, the old man said. Lugares donde ha quemado el fuego.

Y cómo se encuentra?

The old man said that it was not a question of finding such a place but rather of knowing it when it presented itself. He said that it was at such places that God sits and conspires in the destruction of that which he has been at such pains to create.

Y por eso soy hereje, he said. Por eso y nada más.

It was dark in the room. He thanked the old man again but the old man did not answer or if he did he didn't hear him. He turned and went out.

The woman was leaning against the kitchen door. She touched her temple. He didn't remember so good sometimes, she said. He is old.

Yes mam.

No one comes to see him. That's too bad, hey?

Yes mam.

He thinks he knows better than the priest. He thinks he knows better than God.

He told me he didn't know nothing.

Ha, she said. You believe that? You know what a terrible thing it is to die without God? To be the one that God has cast aside? Think it over.

Yes mam. I got to go.

He touched the brim of his hat and stepped past the woman to the door and walked out into the evening dark.

He is no parentesco, the woman called. And yet I have him here. You see? No one cares.

Yes mam.

It could happen to you. Think it over.

He unlooped the bridereins from the post and untied them. All right, he said. I will.

The lights of the town strewn across the prairie lay in that blue vase like a jeweled serpent incandescing in the evening cool. He mounted up and turned the horse and raised one hand. The mountains to the south stood blackly against a violet sky. The snow on the north slopes so pale. Like spaces left for messages.

La fe, the woman called. La fe es toda.

TWO DAYS LATER riding down the Cloverdale Road he turned off for no reason at all and rode out to where the vaqueros had nooned and sat his horse looking down at the dead black fire. Something had been digging in the ashes. He dismounted and got a stick and poked through the fire. He mounted up again and walked the horse about the perimeter of the encampment. There was no reason to think that the scavenger had been anything other than a coyote but he rode anyway. He rode slowly and turned the horse nicely. Like a show rider at a judging. On his second circling a little farther from the fire he stopped. In the windshadow of a rock where the sand had drifted lay the perfect print of her forefoot.

He dismounted and knelt holding the reins behind his back and he blew at the loose dirt in the track and pushed at the delicate edges of the track with his thumb. Then he mounted up and went back out to the road and home.

The following day when he ran the traps that he'd reset with the new scent they were pulled out and sprung as before.

He set them again and made two blind sets but his heart was not in it. When he rode down through the pass at noon and looked out over the Cloverdale Valley the first thing he saw was the thin spire of smoke in the distance from the vaqueros' cookfire.

He sat the horse a long time. He put his hand on the cantle and looked back toward the pass and he looked out over the valley again. Then he turned and rode back up the mountain.

By the time he'd pulled the traps and packed them in the basket and ridden down into the valley and crossed the road it was early evening. Once more he checked the sun by the width of his hand on the horizon. He had little more than an hour of daylight.

He dismounted at the fire and took the trowel from the packbasket and squatted and began to clear a space among the ashes and charcoal and fresh bones. At the heart of the fire there were live coals yet and he raked them aside to cool and dug a hole in the ground beneath the fire and then got a trap from the basket. He didn't even bother to put on the deerskin gloves.

He screwed down the springs with the clamps and opened the jaws and set the trigger in the notch and eyed the clearance while he backed off one clampscrew. Then he removed the clamps and dropped the draghook and chain into the hole and set the trap in the fire.

He placed one of the squares of oiled paper over the jaws that no coals lodge under the pan to keep it from tripping and he drifted ash over the trap with the screen box and scattered back the charcoal and the charred bits of wood and he put back the bones and rinds of blackened skin and drifted more ashes over the set and then rose and stepped away and stood looking at the cold fire and wiping the trowel on the side of his jeans. Lastly he smoothed a place in the sand before the fire, digging out small clumps of grass and backbrush and there he wrote a letter to the vaqueros, etching it deep that the wind not take it. Cuidado, he wrote. Hay una trampa de lobos enterrado en el fuego. Then he flung away the stick and dropped the trowel back into the basket and shouldered the basket and mounted up.

He rode out across the pasture toward the road and in the cold blue twilight he turned and looked a last time toward the set. He leaned and spat. You read my sign, he said. If you can. Then he turned the horse toward home.

It was two hours past dark when he walked into the kitchen. His mother was at the stove. His father was still sitting at the table drinking coffee. The worn blue ledgerbook in which they kept accounts lay on the table to one side.

Where you been? his father said.

He sat down and his father heard him out and when he was done he nodded and rose and took his cup to the sink and rinsed it out and set it upside down on the sideboard. I'll call you in the morning, he said. You need to get over there fore you catch you one of them Mexicans.

Yessir.

We never would hear the end of it.

Yessir.

Aint no guarantee that a one of em can read.

Yessir.

He finished his supper and went to bed. Boyd was already asleep. He lay awake a long time thinking about the wolf. He tried to see the world the wolf saw. He tried to think about it running in the mountains at night. He wondered if the wolf were so unknowable as the old man said. He wondered at the world it smelled or what it tasted. He wondered had the living blood with which it saked its throat a different taste to the thick iron tincture of his own. Or to the blood of God. In the morning he was out before daylight saddling the horse in the cold dark of the barn. He rode out the gate before his father was even up and he never saw him again.

Riding along the road south he could smell the cattle eat in the fields in the dark beyond the hard ditch and the running fence. When he rode through Cloverdale it was just gray light. He turned up the Cloverdale Creek Road and rode on. Behind him the sun was rising in the San Luis Pass and his new shadow riding before him lay long and thin upon the road. Two hours later when he left the road and crossed the pasture to the vaqueros' noon fire the wolf stood up to meet him.

The horse stopped and backed and stamped. He held the animal and patted it and spoke to it and watched the wolf. His heart was slamming inside his chest like something that wanted out. She was caught by the right forefoot. The drag had caught in a cholla less than a hundred feet from the fire and there she stood. He patted the horse and spoke to it and reached down and untied the buckle on the saddle abard and slid the rifle free and stepped down and dropped the reins. The wolf crouched slightly. As if she'd try to bite. Then she stood again and looked at him and jerked off toward the mountains.

When he approached she bared her teeth but she did not growl and she kept her yellow eyes from off his person. White bone showed in the bloody wound between the jaws of the trap. He could see her teeth through the thin fur of her underbelly and she kept her tail tucked and pulled at the trap and stood.

He walked around her. She turned and backed. The sun was well up and in the sun her fur was a grayish dun with paler tips at the ruff and a black stripe along the back and she turned and backed to the length of the chain and her flanks sucked in and out with the motion of her breathing. He squatted on the ground and stood the rifle before him and held it by the forestock and he squatted there for a long time.

He was in no way prepared for what he beheld. Among other things he'd not considered simply whether he could ride to the ranch and he back with his father before the vaqueros arrived at noon if they would so arrive. He tried to remember what his father had said. If her leg were broke or she were caught by the paw. He looked at the height of the sun and he jerked back out toward the road. When he looked at the wolf again she was lying down but when his eyes fell upon her she stood again. The standing horse tossed its head and the bridle bit clanked but she paid no attention to the horse at all. He rose and walked back and scabbarded the rifle and took up the reins and mounted up and turned the horse and headed out to the road. Halfway he stopped again and turned and looked back. The wolf was watching him as before. He sat the horse a long time. The sun warmed his back. The world waiting. Then he rode back to the wolf.

She rose and stood with her sides caving in and out. She carried her head low and her tongue hung trembling between the long incisors of her lower jaw. He untied the string from his catchrope and swung it over his shoulder and stepped down. He took some lengths of pigginsting from the machila behind the saddle and looped them through his belt and unlatched the catchrope and walked around the wolf. The horse was no use to him because if it leaned back on the rope it would kill the wolf or pull it from the trap or both. He crept the wolf and looked for something to tie to so that he could stretch her. There was nothing that his rope would reach and double and finally he took off his coat and lashed it to the horse with it and led it forward up wind of the wolf and dropped the reins that it would stand. Then he paid out the rope and bait his dog and dropped it over her. She stepped through it with the trap and looked at it and looked at him. Now he had the rope over the trapchain. He looked at it in disgust and dropped the rope and walked far in the desert until he found a palo verde and he cut from it a pole some seven feet long with a forked branch at the end and came

back trimming off the limbs with his knife. She watched him. He started the loop with the end of the pole and pulled it toward him. He thought she might bite at the pole but she did not. When he got the loop in his hand he had to pay the whole forty feet of a back through the honda and begin again. She watched the rope make its traverse with great attention and when the end of it had passed over the trapchain and withdrawn through the dead grass she lay down again.

He built a smaller loop and came forward. She stood. He swung the loop and she flattened her ears and ducked and bared her teeth at him. He made two more tries and on the third the loop dropped over her neck and he snatched the rope taut.

She stood twisting her forelegs holding the heavy trap up at her chest and snapping at the rope and pawing with her feet. She let out a low whine and that was the first sound she had made.

He stepped back and stretched her out till she lay gasping on the ground and he backed toward the horse paying out rope and then stepped the rope over at the saddle horn and came back carrying the free end. He tried to see her hind leg stretched in the trap but there was no help for it. She got her hindquarters up off the ground and scratched sideways and she twisted and fought the rope and swung her head from side to side and even once got completely on her feet again before he pulled her down. He squatted holding the rope just a few feet from her head and when she lay gasping quietly in the dirt she looked toward him with her yellow eyes and closed them slowly and looked away.

He stood on the rope with one foot and took out his knife again and reached carefully and got hold of the palo verde pole. He cut a three-foot length from the end of it and put the knife back in his pocket and took from him the pigginsting from his belt and made a noose with it and took it in his teeth. Then he stepped off the rope and poked up the end of it and moved toward her with the stick. He pulled the rope tighter where it was belayed around the saddle horn. He patted until he'd shut off her ear then he jammed the stick between her teeth.

She made no sound. She hewed up and twisted her head and bit at the stick and tried to get quit of it. He hewed on the rope and stretched her out wild and gagging and forced her low to the ground with the stick and stepped on the rope again with his boot not a foot from those teeth. Then he took the pigginsting from his mouth and dropped the loop of it over her muzzle and jerked it tight and seized her by the ear and made three turns of the cord about her jaws faster than eye could follow and unlatched it and leaned on her kneeling with the living wolf gasping between his legs and sucking air and her tongue working within the teeth all stuck with dirt and debris. She jerked up at him. He eyed delicately to the knowledge of the world it held satisfaction to the day and not to the day's eye. Then she closed her eyes and he sucked the rope and stood and stepped away and slowly breathing heavily with her forefoot stretched behind her in the trap and the stick in her mouth. He stood gasping himself. Cold as it was he was wringing wet with sweat. He turned and looked at the horse where it stood with his coat over its head. By dawn he said. By dawn he coiled the loose rope from off the ground and walked back to the horse and untied the coat from under the horse's jaw and unhooded it and laid the coat across the saddle. The horse lifted its head and hewed and looked toward the wolf and he patted it on the neck and spoke to it and got the clamps out of the machila and passed the coil of rope up over his shoulder and turned back to the wolf.

Before he could reach her she leapt up and banged against the trapchain twisting and swinging her head and pawing at the bindings with her free foot. He patted her down with the rope

and held her. A white foam seethed between her teeth. He approached slowly and reached and held her by the stick in her mouth and spoke to her but his voice seemed only to make her shudder. He looked at the leg in the trap. It looked bad. He got hold of the trap and put the loop over the spring and screwed it down and then did the second spring. When the eye of the spring dropped past the hinges in the plate the jaws fell open and her wrecked forefoot spilled out limp and bloody with the white bone shining. He reached to touch it but she snatched it away and stood. He was amazed at her quickness. She stood squared off at him, her eyes level with his where he knelt, still not meeting his gaze. He slid the coil of rope off his shoulder to the ground and poked up the end of it and wrapped it around his fist in a double grip. Then he let go slack the rope that held her. She tested the injured foot on the ground and drew it up again.

Go on, he said. If you think you can.

She turned and wheeled away. So quick. He hardly had time to get one heel in front of him in the dirt before she hit the end of the rope. She did a cartwheel and landed on her back and jerked him forward onto his elbows. The horse snorted and set off toward the road with the reins trailing.

He rose and walked to her. She squatted and flattened her ears. Snobber swung in white strings from her jaw. He took out his knife and reached and got hold of the stick in her mouth and he spoke to her and stroked her head but she only whined and shivered.

It ain't use to fight it, he told her.

He cut the trailing length of the palo verde off short at the side of her mouth and put the knife away and walked the end of the rope around the cholla. It was free and then led her twisting and shaking her head out onto the open ground. He could not believe how strong she was. He stood sprawled on the ground with the rope in both hands across his thighs and turned and scanned the country for some sight of his horse. She would not quit struggling and he got hold of the rope end again and sat with it doubled in his fist and dug both heels in and let her go. When she hit the end of the rope that time she flew into the air and landed on her back and lay there. He hauled on the rope and dragged her toward him through the dirt.

Get up, he said. You ain't hurt.

He walked down and stood over her where she lay panting. He looked at the injured leg. There was a flap of loose skin pushed down around her ankle like a sock and the wound was dirty and stuck with twigs and leaves. He knelt and touched her. Come on, he said. You've done run my horse off so let's go find him.

By the time he'd dragged her out to the road he was all but exhausted. The horse was standing a hundred yards away grazing in the hard dirt. It raised its head and looked at him and bent to graze again. He unlatched the catchrope to a fence post and took the last length of cord from his belt and tied the honda to the rope that the noose could not back off loose and then he rose and walked back across the pasture to get the trap.

When he got back she was snatched up against the fence post and half strangling where she'd gone back and forth. He dropped the trap and knelt and unlatched the rope from the post and paid the whole length of it back and forth through the wires until he had her free again. She got up and sat in the dusty grass and looked off wildly up the road toward the mountains with the foam seething between her teeth and dripping from the palo verde stick.

You ain't got no damn sense, he told her.

He rose and jammed the clamps into his back pocket and slung the trap over his shoulder by the chain and dragged her out into the middle of the road and set off with her behind him sliding stifflipped and raking a trail through the dust and gravel.

The horse raised its head to study them, chewing ruminatively. Then it turned and set off down the road.

In the distance he could hear the chug of a Model A and he realized that she'd heard it some time ago. He shortened up the rope a couple of reaches and dragged the wolf through the hard ditch and stood by the fence and watched the truck come over the hill and approach in its attendant dust and chatter.

The old man swung sawed and aimed and peered. The wolf was jerking and twisting and the boy stood behind her and held her with both hands. By the time the truck had pulled abreast of them he was lying on the ground with his legs scissored about her in drift and his arms around her neck. The old man stopped and sat the sliding truck and leaned across and roiled down the window. What in the hell, he said. What in the hell.

You reckon you could turn that thing off? the boy said.

That's a damn wolf.

Yes, it is.

What in the hell.

The truck's scared her.

Scared her?

Yes, sir.

Boy, what's wrong with you? That thing comes out of that raggin' treat you alive.

Yes, sir.

What are you doin' with him?

It's a she.

It's a what?

A she. It's a she.

He fired it. Don't make a damn fool of me. What are you doin' with it?

Fixin' to take it home.

Home?

Yes, sir.

Whatever in the contumacious hell?

Can you not turn that thing off?

It ain't that easy to start again.

Well, could I maybe get you to drive down there and catch my horse for me and bring him back. I'd tie her up but she gets all fuddled up in the fence wire.

What I'd like to do is try and save you the trouble of hearin' the old man said. What are you takin' it home for?

It's kind of a long story.

Well, I'd sure like to hear it.

The boy looked down the road where the horse stood grazing. He looked at the old man. Well, he said. My daddy wanted me to come and get him if I caught her but I didn't want to leave her cause they've been some vaqueros takin' the dinner over yonder and I figured they'd probably shoot her so I just decided to take her on home with me.

Have you always been crazy?

I don't know. I never was much put to the test before today.

How old are you?

Sixteen.

Sixteen.

Yes, sir.

Well, you ain't got the sense God gave a goose. Did you know that?

You may be right.

How do you expect your horse to tolerate a bunch of non-sense such as this?

If I can get him caught he won't have a whole lot of say about it.

You plan on leadin' it thing behind a horse?

Yes, sir.

How do you expect to get her to do that?

AMERICAN FICTION SUMMER '93

She ain't got a whole lot of choice either.
The old man sat looking at him. Then he climbed out of the truck and shut the door and adjusted his hat and walked around and stood at the edge of the bar ditch. He had on canvas pants and a blanket-lined canvas coat with a corduroy collar and he wore boots with walking heels and a full beaver John B. Stetson hat.

How close can I get? he said.
Close as you want.
He crossed the ditch and came up and stood looking at the wolf. He looked at the boy and he looked at the wolf some more. She's fixin' to have pups.

Yessir.
Damn good thing you caught her.
Yessir.
Can you touch her?
Yessir. You can touch her.

The old man squatted and put his hand on the wolf. The wolf bowed and writhed and he snatched his hand away. Then he touched her again. He looked at the boy. Wolf, he said.

Yessir.
What do you aim to do with her?
I don't know.
I guess you'll collect the bounty. Sell the hide.
Yessir.

She don't much like been touched, does she?
No sir. Not much.

When we used to bring cattle up the valley from down around Cienega Springs wh'y first night we'd generally hit in about Government Draw and make camp there. And you could hear 'em all across the valley. Them first warm nights. You'd hear 'em always hear 'em in that part of the valley. I ain't heard one in years.

She come up from Mexico.
I don't doubt it. Ever other damn thing does.
He rose and looked off down the road to where the horse was grazing. You want my advice, he said, you'll let me fetch you that rifle I see stickin' out of the boot yonder and shoot this son of a bitch right between the eyes and be done with it.

If I can just get my horse caught I'll be all right, the boy said.
The old man shook his head. All right, he said. Wait here and I'll go get him.

I ain't goin' nowhere, the boy said.

He went back to the truck and got in and drove down to where the horse was standing. When the horse saw the truck coming it crossed through the bar ditch and stood against the fence and the old man got out and walked the horse down along the fence until he could catch the training reins and then he led the horse back up the road. The boy sat holding the wolf. It was very quiet. The only sound along the road was the faint dry clomp of the horse's hooves in the gravel and the steady chugging of the truck where the old man had left it.

When he dragged the wolf out to the road the horse backed and stood facing her.

Maybe you better tie the horse, the old man said.
If you'll just hold him a minute I'll be all right.
I ain't sure but what I'd about as soon hold the wolf.

The boy paid out enough slack so that the wolf could get to the bar ditch but not enough for her to reach the fence. He dallyed the rope to the saddlehorn and turned the wolf loose and she scampered for the ditch on three legs and hit the rope end and flipped endwise and got up and crouched in the ditch and lay waiting. The boy turned and took the reins from the old man and put one knuckle to his harbrim.

I'm much obliged, he said.
That's all right. It's been a interestin' day.

Yessir. Mine ain't over.
No it ain't. You mind she don't get that mouth loose, you hear? She'll take a chunk out of you, you couldn't put in your hat.
Yessir.

He stood in the stirrup and swung up and checked the dally and nudged his hat back and nodded to the old man. I'm much obliged, he said.

When he put the horse forward the wolf came up out of the ditch at the end of the rope with the game foot to her chest and swung into the road and went dragging after the horse stiffl-legged and rigid as a piece of taxidermy. He stopped and looked back. The old man was standing in the road watching them.

Sir? he said.
Yes.
Maybe you better go on by and get your truck. So you won't have to pass us.

I think that's a good idea.
He walked down and got into the truck and turned and looked back at them. The boy raised his hand. The old man looked like he might be going to say something but he didn't and he lifted his hand and turned and pulled away down the road toward Cloverdale.

He went on. Gusts of wind were blowing dust off the top of the road. When he looked back at her she had her windward eye asquint against the blowing grit and she was hobbling along after the horse with her head lowered. He stopped and she came slightly forward to slack the rope and then turned and went down into the bar ditch again. He was about to put the horse forward when she squatted in the ditch and began to make water. When she was done she turned and snuffed at the spot and checked the wind with her nose and then came up into the road and stood with her tail between her hooks and the wind making little furrows in her hair.

The boy sat the horse a long time watching her. Then he got down and dropped the reins and got his canteen and walked around to where she was standing. She backed along the reach of the rope. He slung the canteen over his shoulder and stepped over the rope and held it between his knee and pulled her to him. She twisted and stood but he got hold of the noose and doubled it in his fist and forced her down into the grass by the side of the road and got astraddle of her. It was all he could do to hold her. He slung the canteen around and unscrewed the cap with his teeth. The horse stamped in the road and he spoke to it and then holding the wolf by the stick in her mouth with her head against his knee he began slowly to pour water into the side of her mouth. She lay still. Her eye stopped moving. Then she began to swallow.

Most of the water ran out on the ground but he continued to trickle it between her teeth along the greenstick bit. When the canteen was empty he let go of the stick and she lay quietly getting her breath. He stood and stepped back but she didn't move. He swung the cap up by its chain and screwed it back onto the canteen and walked back out to the horse and slung the canteen over the machila and looked back at her. She was standing watching him. He mounted up and nudged the horse forward. When he looked back she was amping along at the end of the rope. When he stopped she stopped. An hour down the road he stopped for a long time. Ahead an hour's ride lay Cloverdale and the road north. South lay the open country. The yellow grass heeled under the blowing wind and sunlight was running over the country before the moving clouds. The horse shook its head and stamped and stood. Damn it all, the boy said. Just damn it all.

He turned the horse and crossed through the ditch and rode up onto the broad plain that stretched away before him south toward the mountains of Mexico.

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☐ A Too expensive ☐ G Safety concern
☐ B Don't know good cuts ☐ H Too much fat
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- Which of the following reasons best describes why you do not eat more chicken? (check as many as apply)
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July 1993

With a starring role in
Steven Spielberg's *Jurassic Park*,
the *Velociraptor* has clawed
his way to the top

The First Action Hero

WHETHER THEY MAY HAVE HUNTED IN PACKS, says a wary scientist in *Jurassic Park*, Any veteran of the late show knows what that means. Before the film is over, velociraptors, "fast grabbers," lean, mean, smart, small dinosaurs, will get together to steal the show from the big guys.

The Velociraptor is the new star of dinosaur slaying across book, film, and even the screens of Apple PowerBooks, thanks to Voyager Software's expanded book version of Michael Crichton's novel. With the Velociraptor, Steven Spielberg has done for dinosaurs what he did in *ET* for little green men: animated a cliché by looking at how they think.

There are fashions in dinosaurs as in all things, and they reflect the times. There being fewer new dinosaurs to discover than dissertations to be written, paleontologists keep revising theories. In one line of thinking, *Tyrannosaurus* figures as a mere scavenger, a kind of giant hyena, with "munching steps," already done. Mr. T still has a role as your lumbering solo villain, the sly, bankable star. But with this Brexitean face, he's old news. The bear is gone, but there are wolves in the woods, as George Bush said, and they hunt in packs.

Velociraptor is a dinosaur for our time: a little guy triumphant through teamwork. Although first discovered in 1924, the Velociraptor got his big break in 1971, when a dig in Mongolia revealed him locked in mortal combat with a protoceratops he had disemboweled with a kangaroo kick of claws always described as "sicklelike."

Even so, Spielberg felt compelled to pump up Velociraptor to make him a star. Six feet high in reality, he goes twenty onscreen. His rodentian snout got a nose job to make him seem tougher. And to land the role, the Velociraptor had to get up early—fifty million years or so—to make it from late Cretaceous to the Jurassic. That's show biz. —PHIL PATTON



ON FASHION

The Mudding Crowd

BY WOODY HOCHSWENDER

THE SYNDICATED COLUMNIST Mike Royko recently wrote that his idea of a fashion statement was to "wear clean shorts," "socks that match," and "the same tie to Italian restaurants and a different tie to Chinese restaurants, so you won't get gravy stains that clash." If this sums up your idea of fashion, stop reading now. You will end up like the guy who hates opera but allows himself to be dragged to a performance—only to snore loudly throughout. In the world of fashion, there's an entire industry devoted to your taste level and needs. It's called polyester.

The truth of the matter is, most men pay a great deal more attention to how they look than they are willing to admit. The important thing, from a man's point of view, is to profess lack of interest in clothes and to project nonchalance in wearing them. The French word for such nonchalance is *degage*, meaning nonengaged or detached. As if to say, "Oh, I don't care." And that's very much what fashion is about right now. I don't care. Gary Cooper was *degage*, as Jack Nicholson is today. This attitude is quite different from looking like a slob.

Come fall, if we may be permitted a few words about woollens and tweeds when the body is yearning for seersucker and poplin, a strong rustic element will emerge in men's fashion. Humble worker's clothes in contrast to the sharp, tailored styles of the '80s have swept the men's-wear market. The look—as proposed by American designers who have taken their cues from the street—is part worker, part farmer, almost Pennsylvania Dutch or Amish in its rigorous functional simplicity. Earthy. Honest. Reflective. All qualities that seem lacking in modern urban existence.

Fashion today is about mud. Seriously. Here is a pretty good description of the current style: "He wore a low-crowned felt hat spread out at the base by tight jamming down upon the head for security in high winds, and a coat like Dr. John

son's, his lower extremities being encased in ordinary leggings and boots emphatically large, affording to each foot a roomy apartment so constructed that any wearer might stand in a river all day long and know nothing of damp—their maker being a conscientious man who endeavored to compensate for any weakness in his cut by unstinted dimension and solidity."

While this is a fairly accurate portrayal of the man pictured opposite from a fall 1993 fashion show, it is actually Thomas Hardy's description of Farmer Oak, the stalwart hero of his 1874 novel, *Far from the Madding Crowd*. The point here is that men's fashion, like women's, is harking back to the previous century just when we are turning the present one. And the spirit of the clothes is far from the madding crowds of Wall Street and Michigan Avenue, discos and swank restaurants.

Features of this style include rough, uneven stitching, inside-out seams, patchworks, blanket-thick fabrics, natural colors, and a prewashed, hand-me-down look. Nostalgia *de la boue* is rampant. Why are designers designing for the madroom peg instead of for the boardroom? For one thing, the times are profoundly antifashion. Comfort and utility have replaced the status and power dressing of the '80s. Designers have come to understand this and have found a way to plug into it. In recent years, fashion houses have been preoccupied with winning over that one third of the public that was suspected of spending two thirds of the money. But that old, upscale approach began to falter. How many blue and gray suits do you need?

Everything is the opposite of what you might think. Men's fashion, once governed by strict codes, has gotten increasingly unruly. The vest, something you were supposed to wear underneath a suit, now stands alone; in summer, it has practically become the new T-shirt. Mislayering—a cardigan over a suit, for instance—is now a trend, along with heavy-soled, lace-up boots with suits. Sweaters are stretched out, oversize.

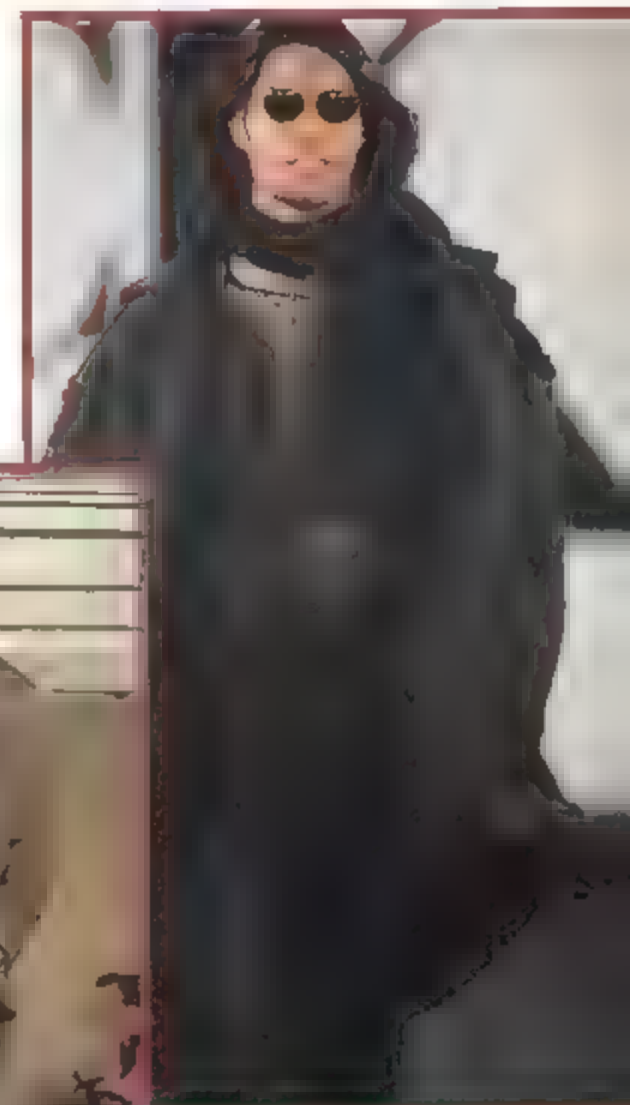
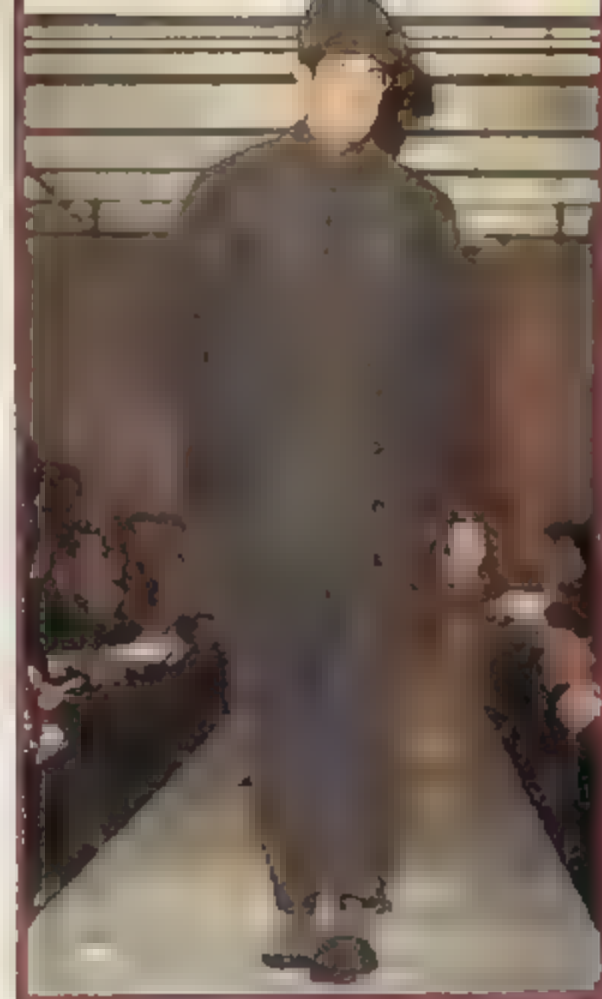
Men seem to be searching for clothes of "unstinted dimension and solidity." And everything should look as if thrown on with a pitchfork.



Left: Proletarian, oversize sweater from Calvin Klein. Above: Rugged man and boy at Donna Karan show.



Left: New old-fashioned country gent from Calvin Klein for fall. Right: Mislayered cashmere cardigan over suit by Donna Karan.



Left: Oil-treated overalls go under Donna Karan's glen-plaid sport jacket. Above: Exposed seams in rustic coat by Calvin Klein.





Take a close look at luggage before buying it. Will the leather bruise easily? Is the weight (when empty) manageable? Does its size fit your needs, or will you be underpacking for the rest of your life?

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On The Case

Holden Caulfield hated cheap suitcases. Hated them so much, in fact, that he would often despise someone just for *having* one.

An extreme reaction, perhaps, but not necessarily flawed logic. A man who's willing to spend good money on his suits ought to take a little pride in what he packs them in. Indeed, a man's luggage can say more about him than his clothes do. So save the ratty bags (if you insist) for the beach or the gym, and treat yourself to something that's stylish and eternal.

Something that can go once around the world—and the baggage carousel.

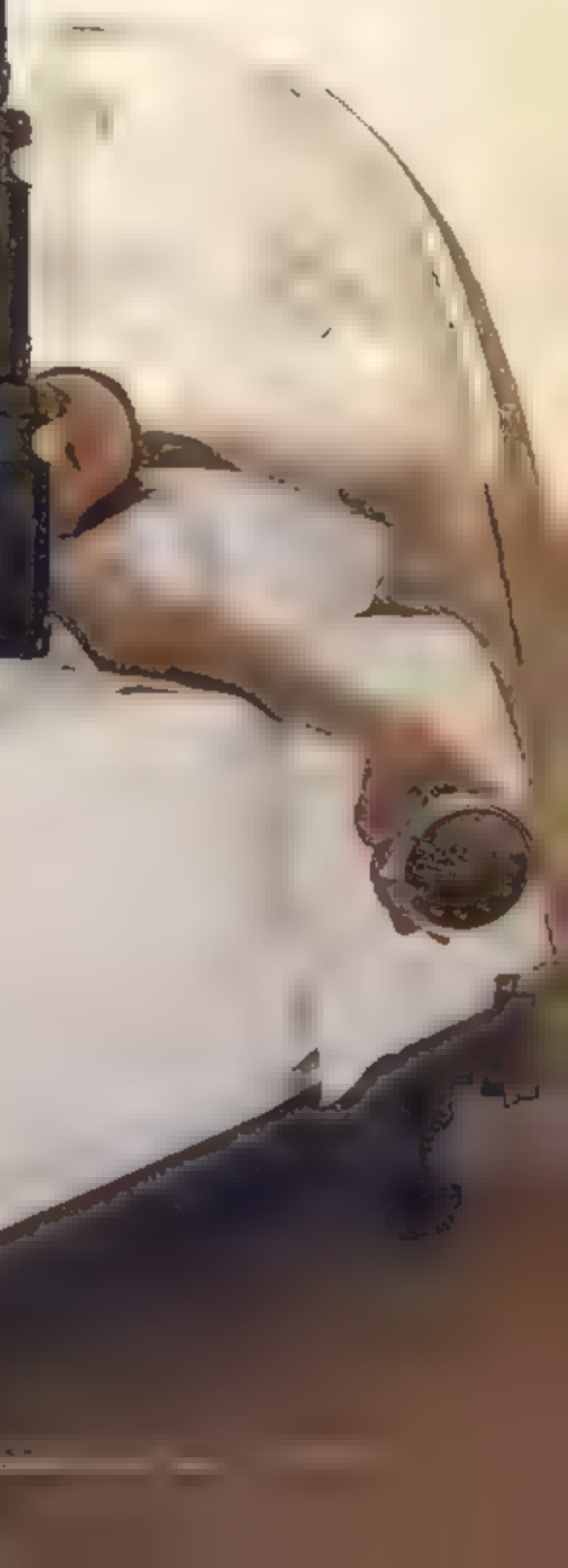
PHOTOGRAPHS
BY GEOFF
KERN





For
you'd better
Phileas Fogg
there's still no sub-
stitute for old-fashioned
steamer trunks. But on
simpler sojourns, soft-sided ex-
pandable luggage is more practical.

Humanaire makes soft-sided steamer trunks with
expandable compartments. Opposite: In's in a
garment bag. The leather carry-on with felt-bottomed
feet. Photo: (right) of the Hotel St. James, in Paris.



[continued from page 55] of a dozen at Chelsea Street Pub when a good band was playing—he carried a money belt stuffed with thousands of dollars.

Among metalheads from local bands like Rif Raf, Flashback, and Blind Wolf, whom he'd meet at WhataBurger, Sunday barbecues, or a battle of the bands at the Cue Stick on the Old Dallas Highway, Koresh was known to "crack a cold Bud," "bird-dog the babes," and fantasize about "the ultimate band," which he'd get behind him and fly out to L. A. for meetings with music people. His business card, printed on heavy gold stock, read *MESSIAH*, a Star of David dotting the i. He was fast, loud, could improvise instantly with any song they threw at him, but nobody much liked his music, which was too melodic and religious. They loved his guitars, though: twenty-five, all air-brushed with detailed paintings—a Star of David with fangs illustrating the points, the ichthus, or a man sitting on a white horse, the white light of God's love obscuring his features. His favorite showed a pair of boots beside a tombstone at sundown: "a tribute" to the album *Pission and Warfare* by guitarist Steve

Vai, whom Koresh found "not religious but very spiritual." He wore it on his neck when, on slow nights, he'd proselytize from the stage. A few kids went out for all-night jams with cases of beer and buckets of popcorn and returned to Mount Carmel for Bible studies, but only one joined up, and he left after three months. "It got weird fast," singer Jimbo Ward tells me. "Especially when you got your Lamb of God telling the flock, 'You don't just shove your cock into her pussy.'"

To hunters, dealers, and weapons freaks at local gun shows, where the T-shirts read *I DON'T CALL 911 OR GOD CREATED MEN, SAM COLT MADE THEM EVEN*, he was regarded as an equal, though few could match his purchasing power and impulse buying. Koresh would think nothing of laying down \$14,100 for two dozen Colt AR-15 assault weapons, \$1,300 for a Starlight infrared gun scope, or \$65 apiece for a gross of "hellfire switches," legal devices to step up the rounds-per-minute of semiautomatic weapons. When he fell in love with a 50-caliber bipod-mount semiautomatic at a small Tennessee concern's booth at a Houston gun show last year, he simply bought the gun and one hundred rounds of ammunition for \$7,000 cash. Calling Jean Holub after the gun show, Koresh told her, "Grandma, it's coming a time, I'm going to bring you a little gun."

BY THE SATURDAY after the ATF raid, the press corps at Satellite City has become a mile-long, \$2-million-a-day tailgate party of twelve-wheelers, prefab homes, camera towers, and sixty-foot satellite dishes—"Twice the size," says BBC correspondent Gavin Esler, "as for the Reykjavik summit." Soon the amenities are extended to include daily Fed Ex and U. S. mail deliveries, portable toilets, and dedicated phone and electric lines. CNN, ever the bigfoot on the block, has outfitted its Winnebago with a post-modern suburban lawn of green felt and yard ornaments: ducks, flamingos, a mailbox, Farmer and Mrs. Jones figures leaning over a white picket fence. A Saturday-night dance is put on; a mayor, running on "the Porta-Potti ticket," is elected; and identical-twin cheerleaders are selling frozen yogurt at the corner near the final checkpoint.

There's a strangely biblical feel to it, Texas-style. With a cold snap and high winds in the first week, brightly colored tents are staked down around the Salvation Army truck, where women in plastic gloves dispense chipped-beef sandwiches and bowls of beans and homemade

boudin. The rumors percolating down sound scriptural: Koresh has received thirty-six U.P.S. shipments of plutonium, each for \$36,000, COD. Koresh has decreed that 1,460 days after his trial and execution, authorities responsible will suffer pestilence and locusts. Koresh has spent the previous year tunneling his way to the superconducting supercollider up in Waxahachie.

The banner from the watchtower looks like a beacon from a boat stranded far out at sea. *GOD HELP US WE NEED THE PRESS. T-shirts soon appear at Satellite City—GOD HELP US WE ARE THE PRESS*—and it's clear that a ravenous symbiosis is at work. The FBI feeds off the Davidians, who feed off the FBI; they both feed off the press, who feed off absolutely everyone. And with each passing day, the explanation for being here seems to drift further away.

Seven miles removed from this circus, on the road back toward Waco, what looks like a GMC floor show has amassed on what is known as Holy Hill, a slight rise overlooking the vast, beautiful meadow in which Mount Carmel sits. Started by T-shirt hawkers, tourists, and a mother and daughter reading palms, it quickly becomes the regional epicenter for the marginalized devout. A pale, cross-bearing woman named Maraiah, who's failed three times to enter Mount Carmel, has set up a station of the cross/recycling center as far away from the money changers as possible, and a Washington, D.C., man named Eddie McTwoHats is beginning his recitation of "the longest song in history," about David Koresh and the siege of Waco. A silk-suited preacher from the House of David in Billings, Montana, is preaching that Koresh is a true prophet but not the Lamb of God: "Revelation teaches that the Lamb will only appear after the Seven Churches of Asia are united. Saddam Hussein is the man who will do that."

Groups of evangelists and third-party politicians are displaying graffiti likening the FBI and ATF agents to Nazi storm troopers, asking *IS YOUR RELIGION ATF-APPROVED?* or warning of false prophets: *THE MOST DANGEROUS CULT LEADER—JOHN PAUL II*, displayed by three renegade 1950s-looking Seventh-day Adventist teens from Mount Vernon, Ohio, all wearing high-water pants, cardigan sweaters, and thick black-frame glasses. "The mark of the Beast," their leader, Fred Allback, tells me, "is Sunday observed as the Sabbath. That's just the Roman Catholic Church, in bed with the United States government."

One blistering Saturday, a fierce-

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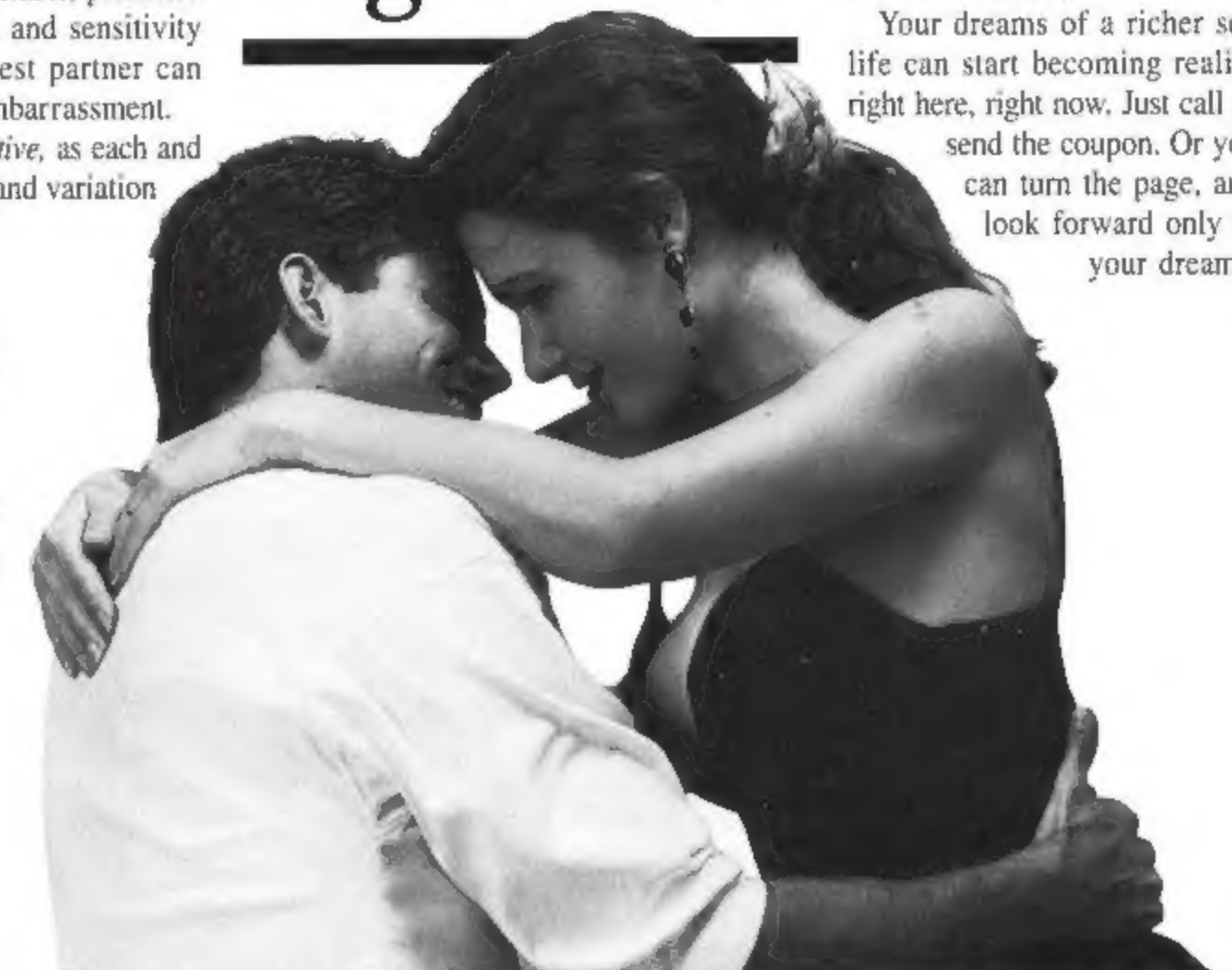
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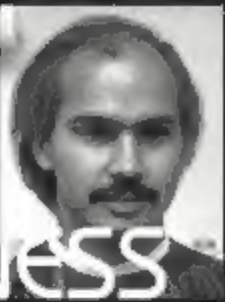
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looking man in a khaki suit, yellow T-shirt, a silver-and-gold Rolex Oyster, and tasseled loafers steps out of a Cadillac, two long-suffering men flanking him: The "God Said" Ministries' Pastor W. N. Otwell from Nacogdoches, a name in the state after a brief standoff that followed an arrest warrant for refusing to license a school run by his ministry, and a man feared by the listeners of his *Voice of Revolution* radio show. Come to argue for negotiations between the Davidians and some "real leader of men, not some 'pharaseetical' hypocrite from the FBI," he lapses into a diatribe on firearms, Luke 22, and Chelsea Clinton's enrollment in private school that has everyone thoroughly confused, heads nodding to the tempo of his inescapable logic. "I'm not a rock 'n' roll fan," he says, "but David reads out of the Bible and he can't be argued with. There are false prophets, but just where in the Bible does it say to take Satan with arms?"

Behind him, the Hallelujah Gang, three "traveling-along" evangelists out of Laredo, Texas, with chest-length beards of red, blond, and black, are talking about the wickedness at the end of the world, i.e., the incursion of federal and state forces on God-fearing communities like the FBI's siege of the Arm of the Lord compound in Arkansas, and the Weaver Family's eleven-day holdout in northern Idaho. "Governments always try to vindicate their evil. The Bible shows the kings and prophets in all their sin. Just like David. They say he's saying he's Jesus, but that's the FBI talking. C'mon. If he was Jesus, he wouldn't have to wait to hear from God, and he certainly wouldn't need automatic weapons to protect his people." As proof, they direct my eye to one of several dozen verses covering their Dodge Sportsman motor home: "The Saints overcame the Devil by the Blood of the Lamb and the Word of their testimony, and they loved their lives not unto death."

I walk with them over to the barbed-wire fence, where they point in the vague direction of Mount Carmel, not visible from here, then, five degrees over, to some points of light glistening in the noonday sun—the mobile-home city erected by the FBI 350 yards from David Koresh. "Mount Carmel," says Rick Long, the red-bearded one, "is where Elijah did battle with the prophets of Ba'al. Just down from there," he moves his finger the five degrees to the FBI, "is where the final battle of Megiddo was waged."

"Megiddo?"

"Megiddo," he says, voice full of angry prophecy. "A harmless little town in the

middle of nowhere, sometimes known with the prefix *har*. In later Scripture, that becomes Armageddon."

THE LONE STAR is flapping crazily at half-mast from the Star of David's flagpole by nightfall after the conflagration. Two days later a blue ATF banner is flying there as well. A pair of white Bobcat tractors is front-loading rubble from investigated areas into Dumpsters, and body parts are being excavated—ankles, palates, whole rib cages. A lot of bodies won't be identified: An arson specialist for the Waco fire marshal says the fire burned at upward of 500,000 BTUs and 2,400 degrees, enough to cremate. But amazingly, wildflowers and the spring grasses are growing twenty-five feet outside the rectangle of what was once Mount Carmel, and cows graze on all sides. It's as if the place were never here.

On Holy Hill, where business is booming, Jesse Amen, one of two men able to sneak past the FBI into Mount Carmel during the siege, tells of how David Koresh washed his feet when he entered Mount Carmel and presented him with a pair of boots when he left a month later. He gives them to Maraiah: gray half-tops with pointed toes and riding heels, soft sharkskin uppers, and leather conchos, which she offers to one and all, Cinderella-like, to see if they fit some new messiah.

At the FBI press conference three hours after the blaze, special agent Bob Ricks, the FBI's voice of temperance and patience for the past seven weeks, is clearly a man in crisis. His pronouncements now—calling Koresh "chicken" for not having blown himself up with hand grenades on the third day of the siege, and asserting, apparently falsely, that two surviving Davidians have admitted setting the fire—seem less like disinformation than an abject inability to fathom what's happened. A week later, more able to summon the righteousness of the lawman, he still betrays the illogic of dealing with people who "loved their lives not unto death" with the imperious logic of federal law: "All we can hope for," he says, equating the Davidians with the white-supremacist group the Order, one of whose members turned state's evidence, "is for sanity to take hold of one of these people."

THE VERNON STATE HOSPITAL is six hours north of Waco. George Roden has been incarcerated there since 1990, when he was declared legally insane for killing a man he claims Koresh sent to kill him. Roden can perhaps pro-

vide an unorthodox but valid perspective on zealotry and why governments feel threatened by the intensely religious. He's agreed to see me if I bring organic nuts and apricots and a black Resistol cowboy hat: "Have 'em grease the crease," he tells me on the phone. "Leave the brim alone."

Accompanied by his psychiatrist, George receives me in a small anteroom of the hospital's high-security ward. For hours he talks only of his past and future ownership of the seventy-seven acres of Mount Carmel. Outside the window, high chain link fences are topped by loops of concertina wire. The Resistol doesn't fit George's head, but that doesn't bother him. He has Tourette Syndrome, and the generic medicine he gets at the hospital makes his hands shake uncontrollably. Some antipsychotic drug he can't remember the name of just now has dilated his pupils, and he seems to locate me out of the fog only occasionally. "The deed's in my name," he says. "It's as good as the State of Texas."

I ask if he knows that the Lone Star is flying at Mount Carmel now, and his hands clench into shaking fists. The psychiatrist leans forward preemptively. Is George aware that what he says may have legal consequences? he asks. The word *legal* brings a holy, derisive smile to George's lips. "The land's mine," he says. "I don't think any of the survivors are going to follow me. But when I get Mount Carmel back, I'm going to show the world what the Branch Davidians are all about."

At the end of a long afternoon, George's voice is still strong, his posture erect, and it's clear he could go on into the night, but the doctor says our time is up. As I leave the wing, he is being steadied down the hallway back to his room and more medication, ill-fitting black Resistol crammed down over his salt-and-pepper hair. In the end, George's hope and defiance don't mean much. He's stuck here in Vernon, a ward of the state, the last Davidian, all that remains of a religion.

As I race away from the hospital, dust devils are swirling amid the endless rocking-chair oil pumps and small Baptist churches along the north Texas prairie. Ahead, the sky is opening in a massive lightning show, and from behind comes a blue norther, blowing my car all over the road. This is tornado weather. You don't know when or where one's going to hit, or why. What a weatherman would call convection, some of the preachers on this road would describe as the wrath of God. To me, the gathering storm looks like one last revelation from Waco, but only a fool or a prophet would claim to understand it. ■

Fashion

On the Case, page 110: Goldpfeil satchel (\$1,595) at Goldpfeil stores, New York, Beverly Hills, Bal Harbour, and Honolulu. For information contact: Goldpfeil, 711 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10022. Hickey-Freeman suit (\$925) at Norman Stockton, Winston-Salem, North Carolina; Doneckers, Ephrata, Pennsylvania; Nordstrom, Portland, Oregon. For information contact: Hickey-Freeman, 1790 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York 10104. Countess Mara tie (\$80) at Countess Mara, New York and Los Angeles. For information call 800-727-1037. Colors in Optics glasses (\$45) at Bloomingdale's nationwide. For information contact: Colors in Optics, 366 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10001. Kenneth Gordon shirt (\$60) at Bloomingdale's, New York. For information call 800-234-1433. Chaps by Ralph Lauren shirt (\$38) at Bloomingdale's and Gayfers, nationwide; Macy's West throughout California. For information contact: Chaps by Ralph Lauren, 90 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10016. Geoffrey Beene shirt (\$35) at Filene's, Boston; the Hecht Company, Washington, D.C.; Foley's, Houston. For information contact: Geoffrey Beene, 1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York 10104. **On page 111:** Coach bag—available in three sizes—small (\$454), medium (\$516), and large (\$568) at Coach stores nationwide. For information call 800-223-8647. **On page 112:** Susan Bennis Warren Edwards bag (\$1,325) at Susan Bennis Warren Edwards, New York. For information contact: Susan Bennis Warren Edwards, 22 West Fifty-seventh Street, New York, New York 10019. Bally of Switzerland duffel bag (\$795) and carryon (\$695) at Bally retail stores nationwide. For information call 800-825-5030. Mark Cross briefcase (\$450) at Mark Cross stores nationwide. For information call 800-223-1678. **On page 113:** Polo by Ralph Lauren trunk (\$2,565) at Polo/Ralph Lauren, New York. For information contact: Polo by Ralph Lauren, 152 West Fifty-seventh Street, New York, New York 10019. Nigel's suit (\$625) at Britches, Washington, D.C.; Mark Shale, Chicago; Neiman Marcus, Dallas. For information contact: Nigel's, 1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York 10104. Alan Flusser shirt (\$73) at Saks Fifth Avenue nationwide. For information contact: Alan Flusser, 50 Trinity Place, New York, New York 10006. **On page 114:** Gucci garment bag (\$1,570) and carryon (\$1,350) at Gucci stores nationwide. For information contact: Gucci, 685 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10022. **On page 115:** Louis Vuitton suitcases (\$5,200–\$5,500) exclusively at Louis Vuitton boutiques nationwide. For information call 800-285-2255.

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The Last Revelation from Waco, page 52: John Berry/Gamma-Liaison; **page 56:** Koresh: DB/Saba; Guitar: James Tom/Sygma; Roden: Rod Aydelotte; Waco Tribune Herald/Sygma. **What We Think About When We Think About Models, page 58:** Moss: Kate Garner/Visages; **page 57:** Wardrobe styling by Randy Palmer for Cloutier; hair and makeup by Jetty Stutzman for Cloutier; mannequins provided by Walt Wilkie/Mannequin Gallery; **page 59:** Tyra and Seymour: Gerard Somoza/Outline; Evangelista: John Barrett/Globe; Crawford: Richard Chambury/Globe; Valetta: B. Nice/Visages; **page 62:** Campbell and McMenamy: Rose Hartman; Smith: Mitchell Levy/Globe; Patrizia: Davis Factor/Visages; Turlington: Roxanne Lowit. **Conan O'Brien, pages 68 and 70:** Styling by Jill Sokolec for Celestine; Grooming by Wendy Ann Rosen for Cloutier; **page 71:** Jane Reed. **The Beginning and the End of Everything, page 73:** Western Habitats, 1993 and Abandoned in Obscurity, 1992 by Peter de Lory/Swanstock; **Speck in the Glades, page 80:** J. B. Diederich/Contact; **Alma, page 84:** Hair and makeup by Christine Dooley for Ennis, Inc. **Bascombe, in Realty, page 88:** Location: Dufour-Baldwin House, New Orleans. **On the Case, page 110:** Grooming by Tamperla C. K. for Page Parkes; **page 113:** Grooming by Todd Allen at the Todd Allen Salon; **page 114:** Hair and makeup by Josef Matheny for Friend & Johnson.

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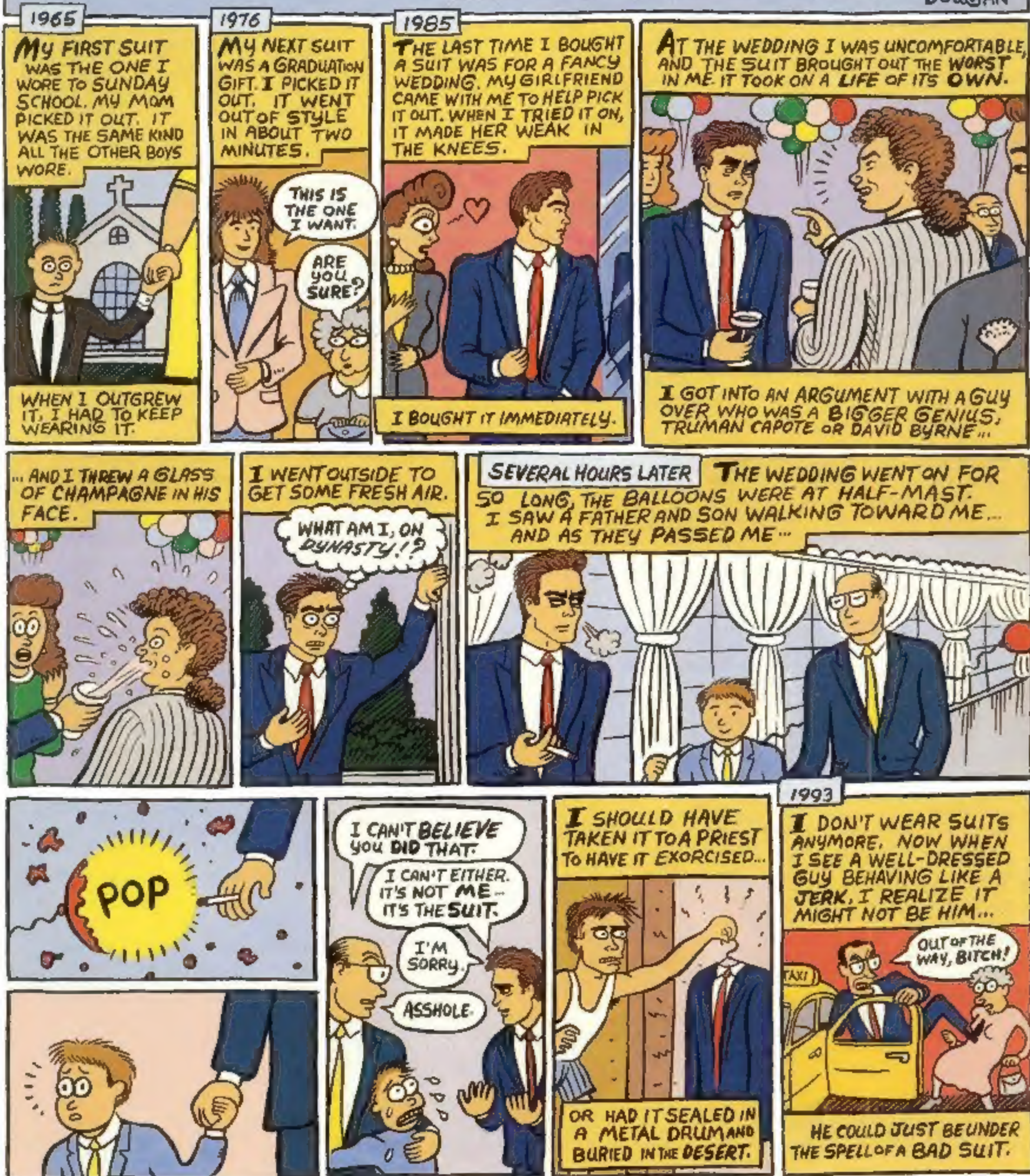
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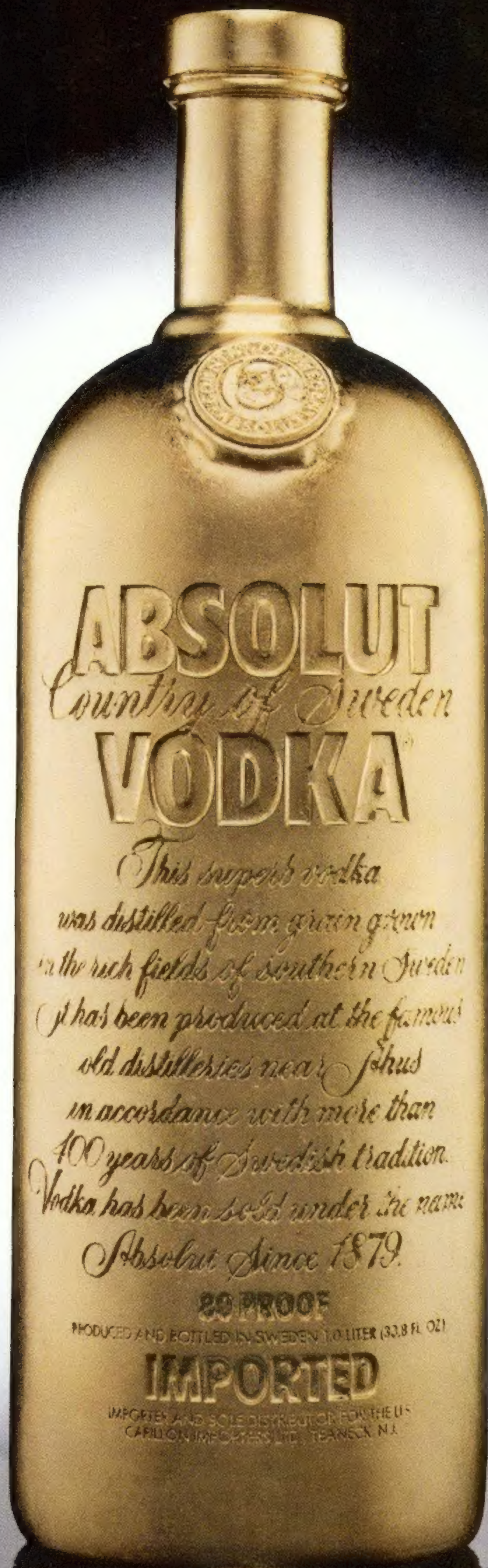
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